Cricket Texaco Trophy: England v South Africa

England leave it late to strike form

Mike Selvey at Headingley

THE difference a day makes. Beaten at The Oval by three wickets last Thursday, and again at Old Trafford on the Saturday — by 32 runs — England cast off their inhibitions in the Headingley sunshine a day later and slaughtered the most efficient one-day outfit in the business, winning the final match under Texaco's sponsorship by seven wickets with 15 overs in hand. This is definitely not a wind-up.

It brought to an end a string of six consecutive defeats for Captain Adam Hollioake — who instead of being placed in the stocks will now probably be put up for a knighthood — and an even sorrier run of eight defeats by South Africa since Mike Atherton's side beat them by five wickets under lights in Bloemfontein more than two years ago.

The key was superb bowling — by Darren Gough, England's Man of the Series, and Angus Fraser that held the tourists to 34 for two after 13 overs, and later by Mark Ealham and Robert Croft — after South Africa had opted to bat first on a spritely pitch that darted and dived wickedly at times.

They managed only 205 for eight, a slender score that might have been a good deal fewer had Shaun Pollock, on four, not survived what appeared to be a catch at the wicket in Croft's first over. Pollock went on to make 60 from 64 balls, adding 40 for the sixth wicket with Hansie Cronje (35), and 52 for the eighth with Mark Boucher (26 not out). If England were slender favourites at the half-way stage, having Allan Donald and Pollock to exploit the pitch gave South Africa more than a glimmer of hope.

That was obliterated inside 17 overs by Alistair Brown and Nick Knight. With rhythm upset by the Headingley slope and the urgency of the situation, Cronje's bowlers lost discipline as the batsmen mocked conditions and reputations. Brown and Knight clobbered an opening partnership of 114.



Knightfall . . . Donald celebrates the dismissal of England's opener, but not before he had scored a match-winning 51 runs PHOTO: RUI VIEIRA

Before he was run out by Jacques Kallis's supreme piece of fielding from cover point, Brown's contribution was 59, scored from 40 balls with 11 fours, a display of free hitting that brought a standing ovation from the crowd and the Man of the Match award from Ian Botham.

Brown passed his half-century in 31 balls, which if it appears sluggish by comparison with Sanath Jayasuriya's world record of 17 balls is for England second only to Chris Old's 30-ball effort against India in the 1975 World Cup at Lord's, and three balls faster than Graeme Hick's record for this competition, against Pakistan in 1992.

Knight, too, played another fine innings, reaching 51 from 79 balls with six boundaries before he was caught by Jonty Rhodes — South Africa's Man of the Series — at backward point as he pushed forward to Donald.

By now England could have afforded to throttle back. Instead Matthew Fleming, in at number three, maintained the momentum with 18 from 17 balls, including a six over square leg from Lance Klusener, before Alec Stewart (26 not out) and Nasser Hussain (33 not out) made the remaining 58 runs.

There will be a temptation, as there is when England win Test matches at The Oval, traditionally the venue for the closing game, to suggest that this win comes on the back of a dead series when the opposition do not carry the same sense of purpose. That would be insulting both to South Africa, who went in with their first-choice team once more, and to England, who for the first time this summer (indeed since they beat West Indies by 16 runs in Bridgetown at the end of March) played compelling cricket.

If Hollioake has taken the bulk of the flak for the team's recent performances, then he in turn deserves credit now. At Old Trafford, when with South Africa at 166 for seven his side had the opportunity to secure a winning position with the ball, he was criticised for not bringing back Gough to finish things off. South Africa recovered to 226 for nine and bowled England out for 194. This time he kept his finger on the pulse, rotated his bowling sensibly, brought Gough back on cue (and saw him hammered for 40 runs from four overs for his pains) and generally did not let go.

"We exploited the conditions better than them," Hollioake said afterwards. "After the first two games we decided to be positive in this one and approach it aggressively. When you are losing, you wonder when it will end, but hopefully we have stopped the flood."

The issue of whether Hollioake retains the captaincy for the triangular series later in the summer, and beyond, remains up in the air. There are those who would wish to unify the position of Test and one-day captain simply because to do otherwise goes against the grain. But the chairman of selectors, David Graveney, had the vision to realise that the one-day captaincy might require different qualities from the Test job, and little has happened to deflect him from that view.

Scores: South Africa 205 for 8; **England** 206 for 3. **England** won by seven wickets

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria

Across

1 Repairing a gap, 252 clowns went on the stage (9)
6 See 26
10 Path or part (5)
11 Caring is affected (9)
12 Excursion to Scots river with little water by Spooner (3,4)
13 Nothing by ear from the river (7)
14 How French is French? Twice English, say what you like (7,2,4)
17 Departed icon gets spin-doctoring — something nasty in the state (8,5)
21 A lot of letters, some of them champion (7)
22 Gild the letters with pleasure (7)
24 London borough with revolutionary connection (9)
25 Girl graduate's biblical kingdom (5)
26, 6 Early ship divides doctor and Dutch uncle in development area (8)
27 Home team in Cerne, possibly (9)

Down

1 Standing room at the back for a foot to beautify (4,4)
2 Voluble little female angel? (5)
3 Put press and broadcasting underground — Conservative, making the connection (14)
4 Where's the pilot? Prepare to shoot mine (7)
5, 9 Mixed gins at pub after "Time, gentlemen, please"? — Fielding next? (7,8,6)
7 Flower — a different one? A different one (9)
8 Classical (I say to myself) doctor (6)
9 See 5
15 Plan the ground for Dorset village (9)
16, 20 Daft cares, daft cares — but 14 (Scott) (5,3,6)
18 Gorge on cheese (7)
19 Some correspondents send an sae — the other way it causes grief (7)
20 See 16
23 Pick up note on tilt (5)

Last week's solution

Motor Racing

Hakkinen is streets ahead

Alan Henry in Monte Carlo

MIKA HAKKINEN's perfect drive to victory through the streets of Monaco was not just another glittering entry in the McLaren-Mercedes record book but could also have been the moment when the softly-spoken Finn made his break for the 1998 World Championship.

With key rivals David Coulthard, his McLaren team-mate, and Michael Schumacher both failing to increase their points tally in the Monaco Grand Prix, Hakkinen ended the day 17 points ahead of the Scot.

"I have competed here on seven occasions and have never before finished the race," he said. "To win in Monaco is every driver's dream."

In the final stages Hakkinen had sufficient advantage to ease his pace and conserve the car. Earlier he had tapped a barrier at the tight Rascasse hairpin before the pits, and was concerned lest the McLaren had suffered suspension damage.

In fact, he had no reason to worry and took the chequered flag 11.4sec ahead of the impressive Giancarlo Fisichella, who drove his Benetton with great aplomb, despite a harmless spin, to beat Eddie Irvine's Ferrari into third place by more than half a minute.

Starting from pole position, Hakkinen just squeezed out Coulthard on the crucial 300-metre sprint to Ste Devote, the tricky off-camber right-hander which leads up towards Casino Square. Thereafter he never looked back, trading fastest laps with his team-mate until Coulthard's engine blew up mid-way round the 18th lap.

"At the start I tried to see if I could squeeze around the outside of Mika on the first corner," said Coulthard, "but I ran out of space and decided to drop back and assess the situation.

"I felt good and started to close on Mika again but my engine blew and that was it, race over."

As if that was not enough, Hakkinen got a double bonus when Schumacher produced an uncharacteristically erratic performance which ended on lap 30 with a vigorous barging match with Alexander Wurz's Benetton as they battled for second place.

The circuit imposes great strain on the cars and usually has more than its share of mechanical casualties. With that in mind, Schumacher rejoined the chase clearly hoping that a single championship point for sixth place might be within his grasp. But in the end he finished 10th.

Behind Irvine, Mika Salo took a well-earned fourth for Arrows, while Jacques Villeneuve slogged through from 13th on the grid to take fifth at the finish, ahead of Brazil's Pedro Diniz. Seventh and eighth were Johnny Herbert and Damon Hill; one and two laps down respectively.

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Habibie urged to free East Timor leader

Nick Cumming-Bruce and John Aglionby in Jakarta

THE Indonesian president, Jusuf Habibie, faced growing calls for action over East Timor last week, on top of renewed domestic agitation for reform and international pressure to restore economic stability.

The British foreign minister, Derek Fatchett, met the jailed East Timorese leader, Xanana Gusmão, in Jakarta, and later urged Mr Habibie to free the country's most famous detainee as a step towards resolving tensions over the former Portuguese colony that Indonesia invaded 23 years ago.

Barely a week after taking over, Mr Habibie sought to deflect demands for accelerating change by agreeing to a new session of parliament to revise election laws. A general election would follow early next year.

It was a gesture intended to distance Mr Habibie's government from the discredited Suharto regime, and came after he paid the first visit by a president to parliament in more than three decades. Two more political detainees were also freed.

Mr Habibie was also hoping to persuade Hubert Neiss, the visiting International Monetary Fund director, to release the next tranche of cash under its $41 billion bail-out, which was suspended as Mr Suharto's government collapsed.

Amien Rais, the most visible and outspoken opposition leader, condemned the election plan. The existing parliament was a "creation of the *ancien régime*" handpicked by Mr Suharto, he said, and it would be "more reasonable, more productive if we wait for a couple of months and have a real, genuine general election".

Mr Habibie received more encouraging reaction from Mr Fatchett, who urged him to maintain the momentum of both political and economic reform.

Mr Fatchett, who was visiting as the emissary of Tony Blair and representing the European Union presidency, welcomed the release of political prisoners, and joined calls by the United States, Australia and Portugal for the early release of Mr Gusmão. It would facilitate a "just, global and internationally acceptable solution to the problem", he said.

The government has promised to review the cases of all political detainees, but Mr Habibie's advisers say there is resistance from the armed forces to setting Mr Gusmão free.

Family fortunes, page 4

Jubilant Pakistanis set off fireworks in a Lahore street to celebrate the series of nuclear tests conducted by their country last week in response to India's challenge PHOTOGRAPH: MOHSIN RAZA

Our Bomb is sacred, theirs a disgrace. That's hypocrisy

COMMENT
Hugo Young

TONY BLAIR'S New Labour was built on nuclear weapons. There were other foundations as well, but the Bomb was proof of virtue, and it had deep consequences. Excluding the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament from the aura of the party required the abandonment of all discussion of Britain's nuclear policy, Hardly any Labour politician has done so for the past five years.

The tests by India and Pakistan, however, don't permit the silence to continue. For Britain was an accessory before the fact of them. Their happening engages Britain as a member of the nuclear club, but for a more particular reason too.

The argument India used for its five tests was, essentially, the same Britain has used since she went nuclear 50 years ago. The critical propellant in both cases was the need for status and apparent independence. "We will not accept an unequal system," said the ruling Bharatiya Janata party. "This says we will do what we want to do," blurted the prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Although the China threat came into the attendant dialectic, along with the doomed pre-emptive jump on Pakistan, the dancing in the Delhi streets celebrated national virility, and the illusion that the Bomb would make India more secure.

India's gambit carries dangers that are far from unimaginable. It wasn't new technically: we've known for 25 years that India could make a bomb, and so, with China's bootlegged help, could Pakistan. But the shameless testing heightens tension, sets a potent example and breaks a taboo that many other nuclear-capable countries — Argentina, Brazil, Iran, South Africa — have preserved. Smashing through the elaborate construct of global treaties, India, followed by Pakistan, justifies itself by reference to the theory and practice of nuclear powerdom. As a small power, Britain, in particular, is the model — and now, sermonising to the subcontinent, the hypocrite.

To this charge, Britain has some answers, but they are far from perfect. The Bomb is the most sacred relic of Britain's past. We got it because we knew how to make it, and Washington wanted us to have it. We justified it as an addition to Western defence. But in the real world nobody ever took seriously the pretence that Britain would use it on her own. Its value was as a ticket of entry, in certain arenas, to the top table.

This continues in the New Labour world. A vast theology has grown up around the British bomb, which will not be revised. In defence terms, however, it is fiction parading as unexaminable fact. Status — the Indian obsession — is what continues to matter most in Britain. Remaining a player in the Virtual War preserves the anachronism of Britain's seat on the UN Security Council. The Bomb is a refuge from the national decline so visible on other fronts.

Its putative abandonment is therefore protected from any pressures for an ethical foreign policy. Could there be anything more ethical than re-configuring defence policy so that Britain forsakes the nuclear option and destroys the illusion that these weapons could ever, in any case, be prudently used?

That dramatic gesture will not be made. On the other hand, nuclear powerdom imposes responsibilities. Here, after all, is a new situation of tinder-box fragility: India and Pakistan are innocents at operating the deterrent doctrine of mutually assured destruction. But since they have failed to show restraint, the nuclear powers must face their own obligations towards disarmament.

The recklessness of India and Pakistan is shocking, and their playing with the poverty of the people a savage disgrace. But it won't be undone. Meanwhile nuclear disarmament has stalled. The enlightened response is no longer to bleat against them but for the nuclear powers to dedicate themselves to a world free of nuclear weapons. Mikhail Gorbachev proposed a 15-year target in 1986. To resuscitate it would be a plausible international commitment, and the only way, as we may now see, to throttle nuclear proliferation.

The pledge would require Washington and Moscow to rise above the sloth of their politicians, and the demands of their military industries.

A strange lack of interest infects the Western attitude to the nuclear subcontinent. This is happening a long way away. In fact, it's the wake-up call which says the status quo is hideously unsustainable.

Other comment appears on pages 6, 12, 14 and 15

India seeks nuclear convention

Guardian Reporters

AFTER Pakistan staged a series of nuclear tests last week, India insisted it would carry out no more for the time being, but indicated that it was not prepared to sign a test ban treaty without a global commitment to disarmament.

Seeking to deflect criticism of its tests last month, New Delhi called for the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Convention, along the lines of existing agreements that outlaw chemical and biological arms, in "a global non-discriminatory framework".

But the proposal was dismissed as unrealistic and disingenuous in the face of insistence by the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France that under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) no one but them may possess nuclear weapons.

It came as the French president, Jacques Chirac, called on the international community to "unite its efforts" to convince both India and Pakistan to sign the Comprehensive *Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)*.

The British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, said: "If India wants to get back to centre stage in the international community then it has got to send signals that it accepts the rules. The first starting point for that should be to sign up to the CTBT . . . without conditions."

Foreign ministers of the Big Five nuclear states are to meet later this week to push for more active disarmament measures.

India's defence minister, George Fernandes, said in an interview broadcast on Monday that India did not need to carry out more tests. But he added: "In terms of a country's security concerns, one doesn't say the last word at any point in time."

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK17	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 14	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 500	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,500	Switzerland	SF 3.80

Bearing in mind the fates worse than debt

MAGGIE O'KANE'S harrowing account of the terrible human consequences of debt in Niger may lead the reader to conclude that the main precondition for reducing human suffering in some poor countries is to write off the odious debts owed to banks, governments, and international development agencies in rich countries (The plague of debt, May 17).

While debt relief may be a fundamental precondition for the relief of extreme poverty and hunger, especially in Africa, there is no obvious way in which a 100 per cent debt write-off can bring about poverty relief without a number of other equally fundamental preconditions being met:

❑ Government spending priorities may not be geared to alleviating poverty. Without external pressure, savings from debt relief can easily be frittered away in conspicuous consumption, waste and inefficiency;

❑ Despite more than a decade of structural adjustment, economic growth rates in most of Africa are only slightly above the population growth rate. Without unprecedented growth in jobs and incomes, poverty reduction efforts will have little impact;

❑ Current market-inspired reforms favour user charges over free or subsidised social services. Cash-strapped governments reduce their budget deficits by charging more for health and education. As a result, school enrolments and attendance rates at health facilities fall;

❑ The past role of donor agencies is not encouraging. Much of the debt to be written off is owed to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund for past assistance that has varied in quality from mediocre to deplorable. Both sides have been at fault;

❑ Systematic corruption undermines all pro-poverty initiatives. Embezzlement of state revenue, even when made public, routinely goes unpunished.

Debt relief can help alleviate poverty, but only if other equally basic causes of poverty are addressed at the same time.

Brian Cooksey,
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

WITH her horrifying report from Niger, Maggie O'Kane has certainly begun her campaign on debt relief with a resounding salvo. All of us in the Third World desperately wish her success in her crusade.

However, debt relief on its own will only temporarily alleviate poverty unless it is combined with a more equitable payment for commodities and products bought by developed countries from the underdeveloped. In this unfettered world system of capitalism, trade liberalisation, free enterprise, globalisation, dog eat dog, the rich prey on the poor, not realising that if there was a more equitable sharing the poor would be able to buy greater quantities of medicines, radios and even motor cars, and both the rich and the poor would get richer.

M H Schmulain,
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

THE G8 summit's failure to provide debt relief for the world's poorest countries proves once again that the rich can have their cake and eat it (G8 debt relief package falls short of hopes, May 24). Not only will the rich countries continue to receive more money from the developing world than they spend on development assistance, but they will also be able to claim credit for using a proportion of it for "new initiatives", such as the $100 million that Britain has found to "kick-start an international fight against malaria". Most of this money will be spent on purchasing goods and services from the G8 countries.

Debt relief would offer the indebted countries the opportunity to decide for themselves how best to use their resources. Development aid in the absence of debt relief perpetuates the imbalance of power between rich and poor countries, and contributes to the growing gap between North and South.

Charles Douglas,
East Victoria Park,
Western Australia

Readers who want to find out more about the debt campaign should contact Jubilee 2000. Their website is at: http://www.jubilee2000.com

Pick-and-mix on human rights

AFTER reading "US under renewed fire over Cuba ban" (May 3), I am again discouraged by the logic of US foreign policy. One assumes that while the US acknowledges that they have not "brought about a blossoming of democratic liberties" in Cuba under Fidel Castro, there is perhaps more contentment in Washington about China. We have seen the recent "deepening" of Sino-US relations with Jiang Zemin's red-carpet trip to Washington, and are shortly to see the Clinton Shuffle across Tiananmen Square. Engagement, not containment.

Developing economic superpowers it seems, with their tantalising markets, perhaps deserve the indulgence of the oppression of a minority people here and there, or have the right to take a pick-and-mix approach to human rights.

Double standards? Certainly, but without being naive about their own track records, Canada, Europe and others, should resist Helms-Burton economic bullying with vigour. The rest of us should take up the mantra that passes for US foreign policy and engage, not contain, Cuba.

Name withheld,
Xinjiang, China

THOMAS W Lippman, in a book review (May 10), says: "[Tanter] implies that Washington imposed embargoes and sanctions on Iraq, North Korea, and other 'rogue regimes' out of some missionary zeal to improve the world; but in reality the United States acted against these countries in response to reprehensible behaviour." What's the difference? And is either justifiable?

Sarah Acland,
Kathmandu, Nepal

The blight of women at war

WHILE Sean French's argument is clearly very persuasive, I must disagree that female leadership would result in global conflicts being settled by negotiation and compromise (Men in trouble, May 24).

By my count, since 1945 there have been 11 instances where national armed forces have been involved in major armed conflict. On three of these occasions one of the national leaders was a woman: Golda Meir in the 1973 Israeli-Arab war, Indira Gandhi in the 1971 India-Pakistan war, and Margaret Thatcher in the 1982 Falklands conflict.

Furthermore, in each of these cases the particular leaders have been at the extreme hawkish end of the political spectrum. For example, a leader who allows (IRA) prisoners to starve to death in her jails, as Mrs Thatcher did, is not in the business of compromise. Hence I suspect this could be somewhat more of a blight than Sean French allows for in the postulated future society.

(Dr) David I Marlborough,
Balgowlah, NSW, Australia

IT WAS disappointing to read Desmond Christy's crass review of The End Of Masculinity (May 10). The title may be wanting, but John McInnes addresses one of the profound social questions of our time and deserves better treatment. Christy's scenario of feigned male outrage was embarrassingly unfunny and leaves one to wonder: if this is what a serious commentator is capable of, what hope is there for the blokes on the terraces at Old Trafford?

B Morris,
Geelong, Victoria, Australia

Browsing for a bruising

THERE are other issues that go beyond the computer industry (Microsoft sued for abuse of monopoly, May 24). It is highly likely that browsing the Internet could, to some extent, replace broadcasting. This highly interactive media, which allows for video and sound, is perfect for some applications — eg. looking up, in your own time, news and sports results, watching edited highlights or listening to reports: far more accessible than 24-hour news services. Just like broadcasting, many of these services are paid for by advertising. Unlike broadcasting in the UK, though, there is virtually no regulation.

One feature of the new Windows 98 system goes even further than this. Microsoft, having full control of the sequence of events when you turn on the machine, will be able to display downloaded ads — a feature of the programme that led to the breakdown in negotiations with the US authorities. This really does give Microsoft a licence to print money. It is vital the UK Monopolies and Mergers Commission hold its own inquiry into this.

(Dr) John Forrest,
University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology

FOR A country that preaches to the world the gospel of free enterprise and market forces, the US government's attempt to constrain Microsoft, a very successful product of the enterprise philosophy, is yet another example of its double standards. In justifying its attempt to interfere with market forces by stating its desire to give more companies access to the IT cake, the US government means, of course, "American companies".

Peter Llewellyn,
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Briefly

I WAS shocked by John Pilger's article and the prominence your paper chose to give it (April 26). In doing so, you lend credence to a "revisionist" and discredited view of the recent history of the Indochina wars — that ex-French Indochina fell victim to US imperialism, while Mao and Ho Chi Minh were angels of humanity and patriotism. Only Pol Pot was a monster, but it was not really his fault since we "colonialists" and "imperialists" had inflicted so much suffering on this poor nation.

Actually, as recent research has proved since the opening of the Moscow archives, this is contrary to the facts. The West did not create Pol Pot. That said, I will not deny some of Pilger's facts. I am grateful to him for having relentlessly denounced the hypocrisy and duplicity of Western governments, Britain and the US in particular, after 1979.

Henri Locard,
Lyon, France

I AM uncertain what "a nonsense" is, but Mike Bridgman (May 24) does not seem to understand labour legislation in New Zealand. The Employment Contracts Act 1991 makes individual contracts between a single worker and his or her employer the norm. Collective contracts applying to more than one worker can exist only by the employer's agreement. The word "union" makes no appearance in any statute in New Zealand, and unions are now incorporated societies with neither rights nor powers beyond sports clubs or similar groupings.

Lesley Beaven,
Christchurch, New Zealand

NOAM Chomsky's article (May 24) provided a good balance to Hugo Young's highly critical piece on him. It gives readers the chance to see for themselves the relevance and depth of Chomsky's thinking.

Hector Marcque,
New York City, NY, USA

PAUL BROWN does not have it quite right (May 17). Patents do not "limit the dissemination of knowledge". On the contrary, they are an important source of knowledge. A patent is not valid unless it teaches to anyone skilled in the art how to make and use the subject of the invention. Full public disclosure is the price paid by the inventor for the exclusive right to practise the invention for a limited time — in the United States for 17 years. At the end of such term the information (already disclosed) goes into the public domain, free for anyone to use. Whether or not life forms should be patentable is another question.

William O Moeser,
Springfield, Vermont, USA

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Afghan earthquake takes heavy toll

Richard Galpin, and Claudia McElroy in Shar-e-Buzurg

ENTIRE villages in mountainous northern Afghanistan were wiped out by a massive earthquake last Saturday that has brought terrible devastation to the country for the second time in less than four months. At least eight villages have disappeared and the fate of dozens more is unclear.

The quake, measuring around seven on the Richter scale, killed at least 4,000 people. It struck the northern provinces of Takhar and Badakhstan. More damage was caused by four aftershocks.

Heavy rain has turned the ground to sludge, burying hundreds of victims, and the homeless sit huddled in the cold and damp under makeshift cloth shelters.

International aid agencies have rushed to the region with emergency medical supplies as well as tents and blankets to provide shelter for the thousands of homeless left waiting for help in coping with the disaster.

"We have to tell the people to leave the area. It is too dangerous," said Shamshul Haq Arianfar, a spokesman for the anti-Taliban alliance which controls the region.

A Swiss rescue team which was due to fly in with equipment to detect trapped people pulled out, saying it was already too late.

The roofs of the houses in this remote area are made of wood and many layers of heavy mud. Aid officials said they feared that those trapped underneath stood virtually no chance of surviving.

"The destruction was quite amazing," said the UN co-ordinator for Afghanistan, Alfredo Witschi-Cestari, after returning from Shar-e-Buzurg, the worst affected area.

Overlooked by the Pamir mountains, among the highest in the world, many villages in this remote and rugged terrain have been completely destroyed — if not by the earthquake itself, then by landslides.

In Shar-e-Buzurg district alone, 32 villages have been affected. Almost 50 more have not yet been visited. A further two districts, Chah Ab and Rostaq (the centre of last February's earthquake), have been largely devastated. Aid workers estimate that up to 95,000 people may have been made homeless.

Chris Teirlinck of the relief agency Médecins Sans Frontières said the biggest problem was lack of medicine. "We hope to take in medicines as quickly as possible. It's badly needed to treat the wounded and the survivors."

Children peer from behind a tent in Faizabad, Afghanistan, in the quake's aftermath PHOTO SAEED KHAN

The earthquake was much more powerful than the one in February that killed thousands of people. And there has been damage over a much wider area. Some 60,000 people live in the quake zone, twice the number affected by the last disaster.

"The magnitude of the earthquake is greater, a lot of houses were already damaged from the previous quake and double the number of people have been affected," said Mr Witschi-Cestari.

When the tremors began the sun-baked mud homes, already weakened by the last quake and the relentless rain battering the region in recent days, crumbled.

The only good news is that the earthquake struck during the day, when many people were out working in the fields. February's came in the middle of the night.

And this time the response of the international community has been swifter. "We have managed to achieve more in a day this time than we did in a week in February," said Mr Witschi-Cestari.

Many Afghans will not leave the area — partly because of the continuing violence in some areas of the war-torn country, and because this is the harvest season for the wheat, barley and rice many depend upon.

"This is my home and my land," said Latif Shah in Shar-e-Buzurg. "I have nowhere else to go. I will stay here and hope that God has better things in store for the future."

Voters in Colombia register disdain for the ruling élite

Jeremy Lennard in Bogotá

COLOMBIAN voters delivered a sharp rebuke to the two mainstream parties in presidential elections in which the independent candidate, Noemi Sanin, polled 27 per cent — the best result yet for a candidate without traditional party backing.

Despite securing a large chunk of Liberal and Conservative support in the days before last Sunday's election, her performance was not enough to win her a place in the run-off ballot on June 21.

Ms Sanin, who campaigned on a pledge to fight the corruption of Colombia's traditional two-party system, said that she would would make public her voting intentions before the final ballot, a move seen as likely to influence her supporters.

Political analysts said the decision would attract offers of political favours and possibly even an eventual government post from the long-dominant Liberal and Conservative parties in return for her endorsement.

Horacio Serpa of the ruling Liberal party, which won 34.6 per cent of the vote, will face the Conservative Andres Pastraña, who won 34.4 per cent. Even so, commentators are depicting Ms Sanin, a 49-year-old former Conservative minister, and her supporters, as the real winners.

The columnist Ernesto Cortes wrote: "An independent, third force has been established in Colombian politics. The strength of Ms Sanin's support will succeed in shifting the agenda of both traditional parties."

Opinion polls had predicted that Mr Pastraña would win a comfortable victory because of voter dissatisfaction with President Ernesto Samper. But what had been seen as disaffection with his government turned out to be a wider discontent with the ruling élite.

"The message to the second-round candidates is clear," Ms Sanin said after the results. "Three million Colombians have voted in protest and made clear their desire for change."

Almost 250,000 soldiers and police were on the streets on polling day, but at least 11 people were killed. Leftwing guerrillas forced the cancellation of voting in 27 towns and kidnapped more than 20 election officials.

Zimbabwe's ex-president goes on trial for sodomy

Alex Duval Smith in Harare

THE former president of Zimbabwe, Canaan Banana, a Methodist minister and father of four, is the country's best-known football fan. But his alleged passion for the players' bodies has landed him in the high court this week charged with sodomy and indecent assault.

In the most sensational trial staged in Africa's most overtly homophobic society, Mr Banana, who ran the country from 1980 to 1987, faces at least 10 years' jail on charges of gay assault against a bodyguard, a cook, a gardener, several students and footballers.

His wife Janet pledged to stand by her husband.

The professor of theology, aged 63, is charged with 11 counts of sodomy, attempted sodomy and indecent assault. The charges arose out of the murder trial last February of Jefta Dube, a former presidential bodyguard who was given 10 years for the 1995 murder of a fellow policeman who had called him "Banana's wife".

Homosexual acts are illegal in Zimbabwe. President Robert Mugabe has mounted a personal campaign against gays and lesbians, describing them as "lower than dogs and pigs". The Gay and Lesbian Association of Zimbabwe claims it has suffered a smear campaign by pro-government newspapers, which allege that it acts as a rent-boy agency for foreign tourists.

Dube claimed that he was forced for three years by Mr Banana to have anal and oral sex, under threats and blackmail. He said he awoke at State House one morning, after apparently being drugged, to find his trousers removed and a smiling president telling him: "We helped ourselves."

Mr Banana — who since his time as Zimbabwe's first black leader has been a mediator for the Commonwealth and the Organisation of African Unity — said the allegations were "character assassination" aimed at discrediting him.

The trial is expected to last at least a month.

● About 200 Zimbabwean students protesting at President Mugabe's rule smashed shop windows in central Harare on Monday. The students, who resumed a protest begun last week, wrecked more than a dozen shop windows but dispersed before the police arrived. They have urged Mr Mugabe to quit gracefully or face the same fate as Indonesia's ousted President Suharto.

The Week

PRESIDENT Clinton decided to forgo a Watergate-style supreme court fight over his claim of executive privilege to prevent the testimony of two top aides in the Monica Lewinsky investigation.
Washington Post, page 15

FORMER Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda has been freed from five months of house arrest on charges that he had known about, and concealed, plans for a coup by junior military officers last year.

JOSEPH Estrada won the presidential election in the Philippines by the biggest margin in a free election in the country's history. He polled 10.6 million votes against 4.3 million for José de Venecia.

CHARGES of rape, indecent assault and sexual harassment filed against Nicaragua's Sandinista leader, Daniel Ortega, by his stepdaughter were thrown out on a legal technicality.

TWICE as much gold was looted from Jews and other victims of the Nazis as previously thought, according to a US government report which says the "Melmer Account" contained $40 million worth of gold at today's prices, not $20 million as previously thought.

A TORNADO that struck without warning wiped out the small town of Spencer in South Dakota, killing six people and and injuring 150.

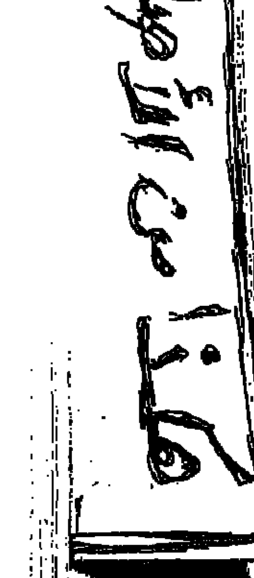
NEARLY 32 years after the firebombing murder of the black civil rights activist Vernon Dahmer, three members of the Ku Klux Klan were charged with the 1966 killing.

ALBANIA said thousands of refugees had arrived, fleeing violence in Kosovo. It asked the world to intervene to stop the "ethnic cleansing" of Kosovo's Albanian population by Serbian forces.
Le Monde, page 13

EUROPEAN Union governments and the European Commission were urged not to enact new laws before 2000, to spare technicians from being swamped with work as they struggle to cope with the millennium bug and the single currency.

BARRY Goldwater, the right-wing former Republican senator who founded America's modern conservative movement, has died at the age of 89.
Washington Post, page 16

Correction: In 1994 Senator Dianne Feinstein (not Barbara Boxer, as stated by Martin Kettle two weeks ago) defeated Michael Huffington in the 1994 California election for the US Senate, Barbara Boxer (D) defeated Bruce Hirschenson (R) to win a Senate seat in 1992



Montenegro poll loss puts Milosevic at risk

Jonathan Steele in Podgorica

SLOBODAN Milosevic has suffered a blow from voters in Montenegro that could destroy what remains of the Yugoslav Federation and prevent his re-election as its president.

Voters gave the reformist parties an outright majority in last Sunday's parliamentary elections that will allow them to block constitutional change and undercut Mr Milosevic's power.

Fears that he might refuse to accept the result and use the army to impose a state of emergency waned when his ally, Momir Bulatovic, the head of the losing Socialist National party (SNP), acknowledged defeat.

At the end of counting, the electoral commission said the reform coalition led by President Milo Djukanovic had a 49.5 per cent share of the vote. The SNP won 36 per cent and the Liberal Alliance 6 per cent, with the balance shared among a clutch of smaller parties.

"These polls could not be considered either free or fair, because of the media blockade and police harassment, but the counting was in order and the party will accept the will of the people," Mr Bulatovic said.

Mr Djukanovic had urged his supporters not to gloat, and only a few fired victory shots into the air in the early hours. A handful of cars drove around town with banners supporting his slogan "For a Better Life".

But off the streets the celebration was intense, and in the police headquarters bottles of raki were being passed around as officers sang Montenegrin victory songs. Support from the police is a strong element in Mr Djukanovic's confidence in resisting pressure from Belgrade.

The Milosevic factor was a main campaign issue. Walls were plastered with posters showing his eyes and nose in close-up and the word "Enough".

Mr Djukanovic, who has won strong support internationally, says he wants to democratise Yugoslavia and make common cause with the pro-European parties in the Serbian opposition. He has threatened to take Montenego out of Yugoslavia if reforms go on being blocked.

This would end the federation, since the other four republics left six years ago when Mr Milosevic started on his failed crusade for a "Greater Serbia".

Mr Djukanovic has been ambiguous on whether Montenegro will secede. He says he is against it, as long as there is a chance of the federation becoming a modern democracy with a market economy.

"Do you want to live under the yoke of Milosevic and his wife as outcasts from the world or as a free and proud people in a reformed, democratic state," he asked at an election rally.

Montenegro, which has only 650,000 people compared with Serbia's 10 million, is dependent on Serbia for electricity and raw materials. But it has a stunning coastline and could benefit from tourism.

The result creates a new crisis for Mr Milosevic. He had been hoping to change the constitution to take control of Montenegro's police and give himself the right to a second term as president.

This now looks impossible. Under Yugoslavia's post-communist constitution, Montenegro has 20 seats, the same as Serbia, in the upper house of the federal assembly.

Mr Milosevic controls some 15 of the Serbian seats. He needed at least 12 from Montenegro for the two-thirds majority that is required to change the constitution. But last Sunday's results barely give him the six extra he needs to pass legislation, which can be done by simple majority.

Mr Djukanovic's first move at the federal level may be to try to unseat Mr Bulatovic, the recently appointed federal prime minister. He may also question Mr Milosevic's policy on Kosovo. Mr Djukanovic supports the idea of international mediation, rejected so far by Belgrade.

Washington Post, page 16

French vote on genocide riles Turks

Jon Henley in Paris

A DIPLOMATIC row flared between France and Turkey last week after the French national assembly voted to recognise as genocide the killings more than 80 years ago of as many as 1.5 million Armenians by Turks.

The motion, tabled by a cross-party group led by Patrick Devedjian, a Gaullist MP who is a descendant of one of the massacre survivors, states simply: "France publicly recognises the Armenian genocide of 1915."

It was passed unanimously by about 30 deputies present in the 577-seat legislature. If the bill is passed by the senate, France — which has one of the largest Armenian communities in Europe — will join Russia and Canada in using the term "genocide" to describe the deaths of between 1.1 and 1.5 million Armenians in Ottoman Turkey between 1915 and 1923.

Turkey denies the deaths constitute genocide, insisting that only about 300,000 Turks and Armenians died as a result of civil war on land that is now eastern Turkey and Syria. But Armenian groups and historians say the community was driven en masse from eastern Turkey for fear it would ally itself with Russian forces then advancing in the Caucasus, and that the exodus was marked by systematic atrocities, mass killings and summary executions.

The Turkish prime minister, Mesut Yilmaz, wrote to his French counterpart, Lionel Jospin, to say the motion would antagonise Turks and harm political and trade relations.

● The Air France chairman, Jean-Cyril Spinetta, agreed to meet representatives of pilots' unions on Tuesday to discuss ending a strike that could affect the World Cup soccer tournament.

About 98 per cent of the company's pilots have joined the strike, which forced the cancellation of 85 per cent of the airline's flights on Monday. Most of the planes flying were operated by charter companies.

Australian swimmer Susie Maroney, with the cage designed to protect her from sharks, sets off from the Mexican island of Isla Mujeres at the start of her swim to Cuba. Her 205km epic, which lasted two nights and a day, set a new world record in unassisted ocean swimming PHOTOGRAPH: CLAUDIO CRUZ

Net closes on Suharto family riches

Nick Cumming-Bruce in Jakarta

THE TROOPS, tanks and barbed-wire barricades that guarded Jakarta's Grand Hyatt Hotel against rampaging mobs have gone, but the threat to the Suharto family's interest in one of the capital's ritziest hotels may be just beginning.

In a bungalow a kilometre away, a dozen lawyers and economists are working on a strategy to unravel the vast web of businesses and privileges amassed by former President Suharto's family and cronies during three decades of power.

"We will gather information from the public on everything," Albert Hasibuan, a newspaper proprietor and member of the national human rights commission who leads the group, promises. His self-styled Commission of Concerned Citizens on State Assets will try to pull together a case for legal action. "We will deliver this information to the attorney-general's office," he says.

Only a short time after the president resigned and before the group had even advertised its existence, faxes and letters were rolling in with details of alleged financial abuses by the former first family. One says the Hyatt, part-owned by one of Mr Suharto's sons, has not paid taxes, courtesy of a 10-year exemption.

After the mob fury that targeted businesses identified with the Suhartos and their cronies, politicians and reformists are taking up the demand for retribution in a city where even street-corner child vendors are hawking photocopies of a list of the Suharto family's businesses.

"Everybody thinks this wealth should return where it belongs, to the people of Indonesia," argues Yusuf, a student who took part in the occupation of parliament. "We understand the Suharto wealth is very large and if we gather it back we may be able to pay off all our debts," chimes in Sakyanata, an economics student. "I want to see Suharto on trial."

Mr Hasibuan's is only one of a series of investigations into businesses that control a huge slice of national wealth. "In 1965 there was a purging of communists," says one finance company executive, alluding to the the bloody upheavals that brought Mr Suharto to power. "In 1998 there will be a purge of first family interests."

A minister for investment has promised to examine the tax breaks handed out to companies linked to the Suharto family. Far more sensitive is the promise by Indonesia's state oil and gas company, Pertamina, to cut away the web of corruption. Its management reveals that at least 120 companies among its suppliers and contractors are owned by the Suharto family and associates, a statistic that hardly begins to expose how the old autocrat's relatives fed on one of the financial arteries now keeping Indonesia's stricken economy alive.

Even their oil industry interests are only a fragment of the assets acquired by a family that in later years was avidly courted by foreign corporations and banks. Michael Backman, an author, says he has identified 1,247 separate, active companies in which Suharto family members have significant shares.

Behind them are the *yahyasans* or charitable foundations, a key vehicle for Mr Suharto's financial interests, and never audited during his 32 years in power.

Iraq claims damages from Britain

Ian Black, and agencies in Amman

IRAQ has opened a new front in its propaganda war with the West by demanding compensation from Britain for damage it claims was caused by depleted uranium shells fired during the Gulf war.

Baghdad, working hard to raise awareness of the impact of United Nations sanctions, says cases of foetal and bone deformities, hair loss, skin diseases and child leukaemia have increased in areas where the shells were used in 1991.

The state-controlled Iraqi News Agency reported last week that a complaint had been sent to the UN secretary general, Kofi Annan, by Iraq's foreign minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf.

In London, the Ministry of Defence said it had not yet been informed. But a spokesman added: "The UK has never attempted to conceal its use of depleted uranium ammunition in the Gulf."

Mr Sahaf's letter focused on what he called an admission by the UK Foreign Office on April 30 that "British tanks used depleted uranium shells during the Gulf war on orders from the British Ministry of Defence".

It said: "A number of diseases, unfamiliar in the past, have been registered, such as foetal and bone deformities and other cases that cannot be explained, such as loss of hair and strange skin diseases. Individuals living in the bombarded areas suffer from such diseases, in addition to rising cases of child leukaemia."

Depleted uranium is used to give added density and weight to shells, making them highly effective in piercing tank armour. It is not technically radioactive, though when it burns and oxidises after hitting a target it forms into small particles which can be toxic.

It has been claimed that the substance could be one of the causes of Gulf war syndrome.

Meanwhile one of President Saddam Hussein's daughters is fighting for control of money that belonged to her former husband, the head of Iraq's special guards, who was shot dead in 1996 after briefly defecting to Jordan.

Jordanian newspapers said last Sunday that a bank in Amman had promised Rana it would honour interest worth $30,500 on an account opened by her former husband, Saddam Kamel Hassan.

Diplomats said it was the first clear evidence that Iraq was trying to recover money, possibly tens of millions of dollars, taken out of Baghdad by Saddam Kamel and his brother, Hussein Kamel Hassan, married to Rana's elder sister, Raghad.

The two men defected to Jordan in 1995, denouncing their father-in-law and declaring that they would overthrow him, but returned six months later. Their divorce from President Saddam's daughters was announced as they crossed into Iraq. Shortly afterwards they were shot dead.

Danish vote averts crisis in Europe

Stephen Bates in Copenhagen

DANES averted a major crisis in the European Union last week as they endorsed the Amsterdam treaty in their constitutional referendum. The result — a 55.1 to 44.9 per cent majority on a 75 per cent turnout — was more comfortable than had been predicted. But it showed that nearly half the population remains implacably hostile to the EU.

Police reinforcements were standing by in the capital to forestall trouble from opponents of EU membership. After a similar result in the last referendum in 1993 there were riots in the city.

The result came as a massive relief to the Social Democrat coalition government of Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, but it also sent a wave of reassurance across Europe because the treaty cannot go into force until it has been ratified by all 15 member states. It had been feared that Denmark, one of only three countries to put the treaty to a popular vote, might reject it.

An emotional Mr Rasmussen, arriving after at the parliament in Copenhagen after the final result, called on the EU to slow the pace of integration: "I am so relieved tonight. It is going to be many years before we have another referendum. I don't think we should yield any more sovereignty."

The next referendum would be held if Denmark decided to join the single currency — which senior politicians want but know they could not win in a popular vote.

In a gesture towards Danish reservations about the EU, Mr Rasmussen said: "Healthy scepticism should not be concealed. It should be kept out in the open and used to remove arrogance and make the EU more transparent."

Most countries, including Britain, are subjecting the Amsterdam treaty only to parliamentary ratification. A referendum in the Irish Republic approved the treaty last month and a similar vote in Portugal in the autumn is expected to accept it too.

Six years ago the much more far-reaching and contentious Maastricht treaty was thrown into abeyance for a year when a Danish referendum initially voted narrowly to reject it, unleashing a wave of scepticism across Europe, especially in Britain, and causing turmoil within the European Union.

The Amsterdam treaty, intended to lay the ground for the EU's enlargement, is a complex and technical 140-page document chiefly concerned with committing the EU to action against unemployment, the improvement of human rights and equality, joint action to combat international crime and increasing the openness of European institutions.

Even its Danish opponents admitted its effects were limited. Instead debate centred on whether Danes should give up more decision-making and national sovereignty to the EU, and especially controls over their borders.

The Danish and Irish polls have caused politicians in both countries to question whether they are the best way of endorsing complex international agreements. It was the fourth time in 12 years that Danes had been asked to vote on an EU agreement.

Child porn verdict stuns Net lawyers

Ian Traynor in Bonn

IN A landmark verdict that stunned lawyers, experts, and multi-media businesses, a Munich court last week convicted a former executive of an online service provider for aiding and abetting the spread of child pornography.

The two-year suspended sentence handed down to Felix Somm, the former head of the CompuServe online service in Germany, was believed to be the first time anywhere in the world that a representative of a firm providing access to the Internet had been criminalised because of the content of the material available in cyberspace.

The judge found Somm guilty on 13 counts of helping to peddle child and animal pornography despite arguments from both the defence and the prosecution for an acquittal, and despite new multi-media legislation in Germany last year which all but absolves Internet access providers of responsibility for criminally offensive material on the Internet.

In the case it mounted against Somm, the Bavarian state prosecutors argued that the Swiss national had knowingly facilitated the spread of child and animal pornography in newsgroups on the World Wide Web to which CompuServe subscribers have access.

But later the prosecution called for an acquittal, revising its views and agreeing with the defence that Somm could not have been expected to control the content of the huge volume of material on the Web.

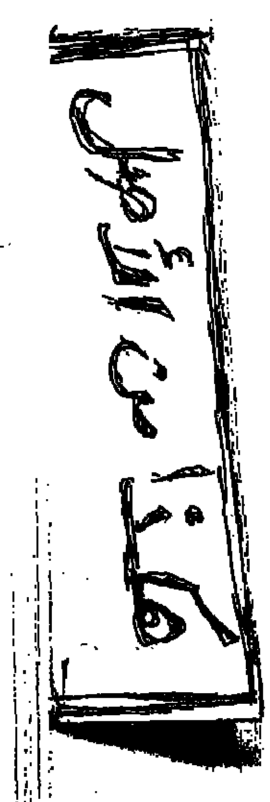
The Bavarian case, which followed from police raids on CompuServe's Munich offices in 1995, was closely watched by German and international experts since it is thought to be the first criminal trial relating to censorship, regulation, and control of cyberspace.

Germany's biggest online service, Deutsche Telekom's T-Online, called the verdict a "huge surprise", while Bonn officials dealing with privacy and censorship regulations dubbed the conviction "irritating".

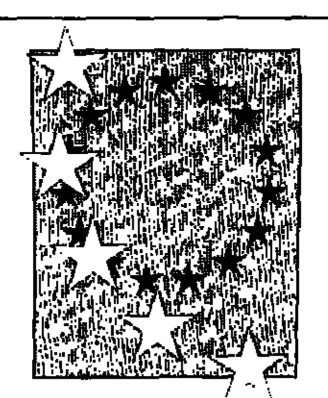
After the 1995 raids CompuServe threatened to quit Germany altogether. Somm then stood down as its head in Germany and the company blocked access to more than 200 newsgroups, later restoring access to all but five.

Internet experts ridiculed the police action as pointless since national regulations are barely able to inhibit what is available on the Internet. Somm's lawyers argued that neither Germany nor Bavaria could set themselves up to police the transnational Internet, and that the problem of illegal material on the Web could only be tackled internationally.

Taxing the net, page 19



Fish has had its chips, as last cod fishery hits crisis



Europe this week

Martin Walker

LAST orders are looming for Britain's fish 'n' chips as the one remaining cod fishery, the Barents Sea, which lies between Norway's North Cape and Spitzbergen, has been plunged into crisis. Unless fishing is banned immediately in the main spawning ground for Arctic cod, stocks could fall below "the safe biological minimum" next year, marine scientists warn in a report published this week.

With the Atlantic cod grounds on the Grand Banks off the Canadian coast now closed after years of over-fishing, and the North Sea cod fishery going the same way, Britain's favourite fish is swimming into extinction.

"Nobody can say they were not warned. Two years ago, cod and haddock were both put on the World Conservation Union's red list for endangered species," says Mike Sutton, who runs the Global Fisheries campaign for the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). "When North Sea stocks began falling, the industry turned to the Grand Banks. And when that closed, with the loss of 40,000 jobs, they increased their fishing in the Barents Sea, with predictable results. Now there is nowhere left to turn, except to the Pacific cod, which is a different species. They'll probably fish that out next."

Even before its publication, the report on the Barents Sea crisis by the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (Ices) has provoked a political row. Based in Copenhagen, Ices produces authoritative scientific surveys of the world's fisheries. But advance word of this report, which says that the cod population of the Barents Sea has been heavily overestimated and that stocks are now endangered, has sparked outrage in Norway. Local fishermen claim they will lose more than $320 million if the Ices proposals to slash fishing quotas are followed.

After a catastrophic fall in yields in the 1980s, which forced the authorities to slash the total allowable catch, from 800,000 tons a year to 170,000 tons, the Barents Sea is supposed to be one of the world's best-controlled fisheries.

This latest "vanishing fisheries" crisis comes just as British and European ministers are scrambling to resolve the last one, a plan to require all European Union fishing vessels to fit transponders so that their movements can be tracked by satellite, at a cost of more than $8,000 per boat. Britain wants the EU to insist that not only European boats, but all boats fishing in EU waters, should be required to fit them.

The satellite project, which will ensure that boats stay out of closed areas and are fishing exactly where their written logs claim, is a key feature of the EU's new action plan to tighten up the often ignored fisheries management rules. Other loopholes of the EU system, such as trans-shipment of the catch from boat to boat and selling the catch in ports other than where it is landed, are also to be closed.

The campaign to ban drift nets on the high seas should be won on June 8, when Europe's fisheries ministers meet under Britain's chairmanship in Brussels. UK officials reckon they have secured a majority in favour of the ban, by allowing an exception for the Baltic Sea, where there are no dolphins to get caught in the merciless nets that scoop up everything in their path and have helped depopulate key fisheries.

The drift net row reveals just how weak Europe's fishing rules are. The EU is still ignoring United Nations resolutions to ban drift nets longer than 2.5km. And Italian fishermen are still lobbying hard against an EU ban on the 16km-long drift nets they use to catch swordfish and tuna, but which also devastate the Mediterranean dolphins.

The battle is already under way to rewrite the EU's Common Fisheries Policy, which is to be renegotiated in four years' time — "if there are any fish left by then", the WWF notes drily. The chief issue is whether the political will can be mobilised to stop the scheme under which the EU "buys" fishing rights from third countries, usually in the developing world. Europe currently spends $260 million a year on this, mainly in paying African countries to let Spanish vessels scoop up their fish — using practices and net sizes which would be banned in EU waters — and impoverish the local fishermen.

This subsidy is part of the bizarre economics of global fishing, for which the world's governments pump in $25 billion a year in subsidies, for a catch whose total value is some $90 billion. All the world's fisheries are in trouble, after the total worldwide catch quadrupled in the 40 years after 1950. But then the decline set in, even as fishermen began shifting down the food chain to target less valuable species, which are used mostly to make animal feed.

The obvious answer, which the EU adopted as a politically controversial strategy two years ago, was to cut the fleet. But the initial target, to reduce the European fleet by 40 per cent over six years, has been scrapped. The EU now has the worst of all worlds, failing to manage its threatened stocks, while infuriating its fishermen.

Perhaps the saddest aspect of the news from the Barents Sea is the doubt it casts on one of the most hopeful development, in the sad saga of human mismanagement of the marine harvest. Two years ago, WWF and the food giant Unilever jointly set up the Marine Stewardship Council, with a pledge from Unilever only to use fish from sustainable stocks. That far-sighted agreement depends entirely on the quality of that inexact science of estimating fish stocks in the sea. The forthcoming announcement by Ices that its earlier estimates of Barents Sea stocks were wrong undermines the entire strategy.



US tested and found wanting

WASHINGTON DIARY
Martin Kettle

DO NOT be taken in by American government claims that it did not know about impending nuclear developments in India and Pakistan. Those claims depend, as the philosophers would say, on what we mean by knowledge. Did Washington have the information about the impending tests? Yes, it did. Did Washington have a foreign policy which enabled it to make use of the information. That's another matter.

Even if — a big if — it is true that US intelligence assessments of India's preparations for its May 11 nuclear tests were faulty, there is now clear evidence that the United States had been informed at the highest level several weeks in advance about the direction that events were taking. Perhaps the quality of the CIA's satellite surveillance did let the administration down in early May, but the really decisive failure occurred earlier, at the level of policy.

On April 3, five weeks before the Indian tests began, Pakistan's prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, wrote to President Clinton to warn him that India was building up to a detonation in the Rajasthan desert. On the same day, Pakistan's foreign minister, Gohar Ayub Khan, wrote to the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, in similar terms. Khan's letter also included the warning that if India tested, Pakistan might be forced to follow suit. The Pakistan embassy confirmed the existence of these letters to the Washington Post in late May. It is not, therefore, a question of US ignorance, but of US impotence in the face of the information given by the Pakistan government.

Washington's official line in response to the Indian and Pakistan crisis is an extremely wide-ranging shrug of the shoulders. It says that the world has exaggerated and over-simplified the ability of the US to orchestrate and enforce a post-cold war Pax Americana. At a White House press conference, Clinton's spokesman, Mike McCurry, was asked: "What does it say about the president's clout in international affairs that both India and now Pakistan have summarily rejected his advice?"

McCurry replied: "It says that the United States of America, despite all of its wealth and its might, cannot control every event, every place in the world, particularly in a place where for five decades now governments have fought wars, and peoples have lived with incredible tension." In other words, the US can propose but it cannot dispose.

This is a significant admission, in as much as it amounts to an official denial of the view of the world that was propagated by many experts when the Soviet Union ceased to exist at the start of this decade. There was now, the experts all said, a unipolar world in place of the old bipolar world of the cold war. US economic and political interests were now coterminous with those of the globe as a whole, and were backed up by the unique military reach and firepower of America.

Eight years later, however, history is up and running again in all sorts of different directions, and the loose talk about new world orders now looks distinctly flaky. In this context, the crisis in the Indian subcontinent is only the latest in a number of international crises that have exposed the glib assumptions of the triumphalist 1989-91 period.

AT THE time of the Gulf war, in 1991, the coalition against Saddam Hussein's Iraq appeared to be the prototype for the resolution of post-cold war conflicts. It involved the use of force by the United Nations after due process of international law and diplomacy. It was under the de facto leadership of the US, which promoted and executed the military response, but it was backed by all of the most powerful second-rank nations in the world, including even Russia.

Its significance was further underlined by the fact that it was against Iraq, one of the world's most highly militarised states, and that it took place in one of the most important regions of the globe, whether politically, economically or militarily. All this highlighted the contrast between the abject collapse of the old Soviet order that had preceded it and the devastatingly effective success of the American-led alliance.

What has become clear since 1991, however, is that the Gulf war coalition was not a typical feature of the post-cold war world. Subsequent international crises — though admittedly not as dangerous as Saddam's invasion of Kuwait — have not been solved so easily. Even in the Gulf, it has been impossible to reassemble the coalition to enforce the American/UN policy against Iraq, and the task becomes progressively more arduous with each succeeding stand-off by Saddam.

The Gulf war model was not adopted to achieve American objectives in crises as diverse as Bosnia, Rwanda or Congo. Meanwhile the US finds itself increasingly isolated in its approach towards nations such as Cuba and Iran, and its capacity to consolidate the peace process in the Middle East becomes less convincing by the week.

In this context the recent humiliation of American policy in the Indian subcontinent can be seen as a failure to evolve a serious, consistent and engaged approach to the region. During the cold war, the US interest in Pakistan was simple and clear. India was Russia's client, therefore Pakistan became America's, and also, for the same reason, China's. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, US military involvement in Pakistan escalated even further. When the Soviet Union collapsed, the US ceased to have as much interest in Pakistan, and began to cultivate a new relationship with India.

But the truth was that South Asia had never been seen as a priority for US foreign policy, unlike the Gulf to the west, China to the east, and increasingly the newly independent (and in some cases nuclear) former Soviet republics in central Asia to the north.

Clinton's repeated postponement of his long-scheduled trip to the region has been emblematic. The subcontinent somehow didn't matter enough in either strategic thinking or in domestic US politics for him to need to make the visit. Contrast that with Ireland, Africa and, above all, China.

So when Sharif warned Clinton about the preparations in Rajasthan it wasn't Washington's knowledge that was defective. It was its ability to understand and act on what it knew. Complacency, not ignorance, has landed the administration in its latest international peril.

Comment, page 12
Washington Post, page 15

Trial allows glimpse of harsh regime

HUMAN rights observers were last week given a rare glimpse into the workings of one of the world's least known — and least savoury — regimes, *writes John Hooper*.

In Malabo, the capital of the former Spanish colony of Equatorial Guinea, 117 people went on trial accused of separatist violence. The defendants, many of whom face the death penalty, are being judged at a summary hearing under a code of military law that has remained substantially unchanged since it was imposed by the late Spanish dictator, General Francisco Franco, in 1948.

Possibly because four of the defendants are Spanish citizens, the government has allowed foreign journalists to cover the proceedings and has agreed to the presence of observers from Amnesty International.

The defendants showed signs of apparent torture, but their complaints of mistreatment were dismissed by the judge, reports reaching Madrid said. Several were missing parts of their ears and told journalists in court they had been mutilated with razors at a military barracks in Luba, on the island of Bioko.

Asked by the prosecutor to speak more loudly, one defendant replied: "I can't. My jaw was broken during the interrogations."

But the Spanish newspaper El Pais quoted Equatorial Guinea's information minister, Lucas Nguema, as saying: "I hadn't noticed [the apparent evidence of torture]. They may be tattoos or some custom".

In January, guerrillas of the Movement for the Self-determination of the Island of Bioko attacked three police stations in Luba, killing four soldiers and a civilian. Bioko is the seat of the administration and has been increasingly populated since independence by members of the mainland Fang tribe. The rebel group was formed in 1993 by members of the Bubi tribe, which originally inhabited Bioko.

Equatorial Guinea has been ruled since 1979 by President Teodoro Obiang, who came to power following the overthrow and execution of his uncle, Francisco Macías Nguema. Mr Obiang was re-elected two years ago with more than 90 per cent of the vote in a poll marred by claims of blatant fraud.

NIGERIA
Malabo
Luba
BIOKO
80km
EQUATORIAL GUINEA
CAMEROON
RIO MUNI
Gulf of Guinea
GABON

Ex-minister in dock over death squads

John Hooper in Madrid

A DOZEN men went on trial in Madrid last week in proceedings that represent a milestone in Spain's renascent democracy. They included the former interior minister, José Barrionuevo, the third most senior member of Felipe González's Socialist government, the former leader of the Socialist party in the Basque Country, and senior police officers.

Their prosecution is the latest stage in the unravelling of the tangled story of the Spanish state's Anti-terrorist Liberation Groups, or GAL — "death squads" that appeared in 1983 after the Socialists came to power. Their mission was to destabilise ETA in its "safe havens" across the border in France.

Yet of the 27 people the squads killed, barely half were ETA guerrillas. Some were not even ETA sympathisers. Some were not even Basques.

A man who was held for 10 days in 1983 in a lonely mountain farmhouse was not a terrorist desperado, but a French citizen by the name of Segundo Marey, an employee of a co-operative. The prosecution alleges he has been marked for life by his experience and has suffered ever since from a neurotic death wish.

The trial that opened last week of those who organised his abduction and supervised his detention is an extraordinary spectacle. The two politicians, who for years were chiefly responsible for the maintenance of law and order in Spain, stand charged with running an armed gang and holding a member of the public against his will. If convicted, Mr Barrionuevo and his deputy, Rafael Vera, face up to 23 years in prison.

One of their co-defendants, a former police inspector, enters and leaves the court each day in a motorcycle helmet that completely obscures his features. His former colleagues have several times been involved in bitter, indignant exchanges with counsel, seemingly unable to accept that their conduct can be open to question.

Events surrounding the trial are no less bizarre. Much of the evidence before the court first surfaced in the Madrid newspaper El Mundo. Last October, copies began to circulate of a secretly recorded video showing the paper's editor, Pedro Ramirez, indulging in sex play with a prostitute. She has since told an investigating magistrate she was paid $320,000 to have the encounter filmed. She has said the money was handed over by a former Socialist civil governor in the Basque country in the presence of an aide of Mr González.

But the hearing is much more than a curiosity. A commentator in the weekly news magazine Tiempo said that, with the exception of cases arising from the 1981 coup attempt, this was the "most important trial since the start of Spain's democratic transformation".

The issue is the extent to which Spaniards wish their democracy to be one governed wholly by the rule of law. The question has split society from top to bottom.

Some argue that in a country where people are still being killed by separatist terrorism, government must sometimes shut its eye to the violation of legal niceties. Others maintain that, even if this is no longer a sustainable argument, it was a more valid one in the early 1980s when ETA's violence was at its height and the young, incoming Socialist cabinet was under immense pressure from the security establishment.

For supporters of the prosecution, on the other hand, any backsliding from the principle of legitimacy risks pushing the country spinning back towards authoritarianism.

These apparently clear-cut divisions are blurred by claims that the trial's promoters were motivated less by a concern for legal rectitude than a desire for political vengeance or advantage.

The judge who saw the case through its early stages was a disillusioned former member of Mr González's administration. One of the police officers first implicated, and convicted, of a role in the GAL testified last week that, before the conservative People's party took power in 1996, one of its most senior officials, Francisco Alvarez-Cascos, now the deputy prime minister, promised him an eventual pardon for testimony incriminating the Socialists.

He said the meeting took place in Mr Ramirez's office at El Mundo. Both Mr Ramirez and Mr Alvarez-Cascos have denied his allegations.

Above and beyond the intricate, often sordid details of the case, though, is the fact of the trial itself — based firmly on the premise that the state must keep within the confines of the law, even in its pursuit of those who seek to destroy it.

Italy blames officers in Somali case

Philip Willan in Rome

ITALY has disciplined 12 military officers for failing to protect Somalis from abusive Italian troops who took part in United Nations peace-keeping between 1992 and 1994.

A government inquiry found evidence that Italian troops taunted Somalis with racist insults and fascist salutes, but said that allegations of rape and torture could not be proved, despite apparent photographic evidence published in the media last year.

The report was attacked as a whitewash by campaigners against violence in the armed forces.

A defence ministry official said the punishments ranged from formal reprimands to suspensions and confinement to barracks.

The government commission blamed a breakdown in the military chain of command for the failure to protect Somali citizens.

"Episodes of violence were sporadic and localised, not widespread and general," the commission, chaired by Ettore Gallo, a retired constitutional court judge, concluded. "But that does not attenuate the gravity of having accepted, or tolerated as high-spirited pranks, gross behaviour," the report said. "Examples of such deplorable behaviour are the frequent racist taunting of Somalis and the display of Nazi and fascist symbols and slogans by certain units."

"This is an insult to the intelligence of the Italian people," said Falco Accame, chairman of an association representing the victims of violence in the armed forces.

He called on President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro to appoint a new commission with wider powers. He also criticised the commission for failing to go to Somalia and for obtaining evidence from only about 10 per cent of potential witnesses.

End ‘emotive aid appeals’

Lucy Patton

CLARE Short provoked anger among aid agencies last week when she urged them to end humanitarian appeals that make people "flinch and turn away".

Warning of compassion fatigue, the International Development Secretary encouraged agencies to use positive advertising to attract funds for longer term development in poorer countries.

But Peter Walker, director of disaster policy for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, hit back with a defence of humanitarian aid work after Ms Short's speech to a London conference.

"It is a little bit like blaming 999 emergency crews because we have a lot of road accidents," Mr Walker said, describing Ms Short's speech as "good analysis, wrong conclusion".

Ms Short told the Dispatches from Disaster Zones conference: "In recent years, there has been an increase in humanitarian aid and a reduction of aid for development.

"If it is all humanitarian, we are just going round in an endless cycle that never reaches a solution. The cycle is fantastically destructive."

She added: "Out of genuine compassion, we are trapped in a destructive cycle that is preventing us mobilising the political will to go forward.

"What I'd like to consider is that we cease to do those kinds of appeals. We could do positive advertising. I don't believe there is a lack of compassion among people, but there is a deep despondency that is paralysing."

The director of the European Community Humanitarian Office, Alberto Navarro, said humanitarians were not responsible for conflicts. Humanitarians and those involved in development were two sides of the same coin. They had the same objectives.

A spokeswoman for Ms Short's department said later: "[Her] comments were in no way a criticism of the valuable work done by non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

"The Department for International Development (DFID) has always supported their efforts in bringing urgently needed humanitarian assistance to those who need it and will continue to do so.

"What we must remember, and why the Secretary of State warned of so-called compassion fatigue, is that the media only ever tends to show negative images from the developing world — painful, distressing pictures which, while prompting an emotional response, also persuade the public that this is the only story to be told from the developing world, that of suffering, famine and death.

"This could not be further from the truth. The DFID, together with developing countries and NGOs, is involved in hundreds of projects which encourage sustainable development, projects which are helping the developing world to overcome and prevent humanitarian crises such as the one we have witnessed in Sudan."

The conference was held amid the escalating crisis in Sudan, where an estimated 350,000 children and adults are starving after decades of civil war.

The event debated how the press and aid agencies inform the public about humanitarian disasters overseas.

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Geri Halliwell: walking away after two years' fame PHOTO: RICHARD YOU...

Holiday season begins with safety warnings

Ian Traynor in Bonn and Keith Harper

A CROSS-channel ferry carrying thousands of British and foreign tourists between Dover and Calais was condemned as unsafe in a survey of European car and passenger ferries published last week, while a British channel ferry was also found to be hazardous when inspected last month.

SeaFrance's 17-year-old ferry, Renoir, plying the Dover-Calais route with a capacity of 1,660 passengers, was found to be at sea with its inflatable liferafts locked and too few lifejackets on board, and two doors to the cargo deck defective and open during the voyage.

The Stena Antrim, belonging to the Dover-based P&O-Stena Line and until recently plying the Newhaven-Dieppe route, was also found to be faulty, with safety features poorly maintained, a bow door defect, inadequate fireproofing, and an emergency exit locked during the voyage with no key available.

It was the subject of a spot check on April 10 by a team of undercover marine surveyors working for ADAC, Germany's main automobile association.

P&O-Stena said its ferry, which carries 1,380 passengers, was taken out of service on April 22 as part of the company's new business plan.

SeaFrance described the ADAC findings as "stupid" and insisted that all its ships were "absolutely safe". From Calais, Christian Tacquet, SeaFrance's commercial director, said there was "absolutely no problem" with the Renoir.

Robert Sauter, the Munich-based director of the ADAC survey, which examined 30 European ferries, said that the two Channel ferries were the only north European ships to emerge with negative findings.

"Shocking safety shortcomings still exist on many passenger ferries in Europe. In an emergency where there is inadequate safety, passengers can only rely on their good fortune," says the report.

Meanwhile a plan to halve air safety margins in response to congested skies could have disastrous consequences unless safeguards are added, experts have warned.

New rules mean that within three years aircraft at high altitude over Europe will be separated in height by 1,000 feet instead of 2,000.

Airlines from eastern and southern Europe, which lack the technology to cope with the new regulations governing distance between aircraft, have fuelled fears of increased near-misses.

The changes, which are expected to be introduced by 2001 after trials next year, will mean that up to double the number of aircraft will be able to fly at high altitudes over Europe. The move will lead to significant fuel savings for the airlines.

The Civil Aviation Authority welcomed the change. "Plans are well under way to introduce the scheme, which would have complete backing by our own air traffic control system," a spokesman said. "There is no threat to safety because advances in technology allow this to happen."

The bubble that went pop

Caroline Sullivan

SO FAREWELL then, Ginger. And farewell, probably sooner rather than later, Scary, Sporty, Baby and Posh. Geri Halliwell has officially left the Spice Girls.

Although the remaining four maintain they'll carry on without their de facto leader, history is against them. The Supremes never recovered from Diana Ross's departure, and the Jackson Five were sunk when Michael went solo.

When the Spice phenomenon does end — as it must, given the void left by the member who most embodied Girl Power — obscurity beckons, except for Ginger, a future chat-show host if ever there was one, and Sporty, the one with the best voice.

The other three are about to discover that the words "ex-Spice Girl" don't open many doors. Not that they need to work; they have supposedly earned £13 million each in just under two years.

But the money may not compensate for the loss of the celebrity which was their driving force. They have always admitted fame was their primary goal.

Unimpeded by concerns about credibility, the girls did whatever was necessary, with no TV show too naff, no promotional tie-in too embarrassing.

For the Spice Girls music was more a marketing tool than an artistic passion; none the less, they have produced some pretty good records — Wannabe and Spice Up Your Life. These trashy pop classics will survive as have Abba's Waterloo and Wham!'s Young Guns.

Only time will tell if Ginger and company really have made a difference, apart from making slut clothes trendy. As it stands, the only real barrier they have surmounted is that separating art and commerce.

Louise Woodward sacks key lawyer

Nick Hopkins and Martin Kettle

LOUISE Woodward's defence team was in turmoil this week as a key member of her legal team was dismissed.

Woodward, aged 20, who last October was convicted in a Massachusetts court of killing eight-month-old Matthew Eappen, has always maintained that her only concern is to clear her name and return to Britain.

But Elaine Whitfield-Sharp, a legal specialist in brain injury who was sacked on Monday, believes Woodward has held protracted discussions with publishers. She learned talks were being arranged without her knowledge or that of Andrew Good, Harvey Silvergate and Barry Scheck, the other attorneys in the case.

Ms Sharp believes that the Woodwards have already received £40,000 from one newspaper, and she complained to the family that the lucrative deals constituted a huge breach of trust.

In a taped conversation with a friend published in the Mirror newspaper, Ms Sharp referred to Woodward as a "lying monster", and said she had doubts about the appeal fund which raised almost £250,000 to help pay her legal fees.

Throughout last year's trial, Ms Sharp insisted that Woodward would not make money out of the case, arguing that public support for her would evaporate if she tried to cash in.

Woodward herself was adamant. On the day she was freed last November, she said: "I have no intention of exploiting this tragedy. It is not a subject for sensationalism or profiteering."

Woodward had been living at Ms Sharp's house in Marblehead, Massachusetts, but moved out in March after the breakdown of their relationship.

The rift has come at a delicate time for the au pair, who is awaiting the outcome of prosecution and defence appeals that could see her sent back to jail with a minimum of 15 years before parole, or cleared of involuntary manslaughter and allowed to return home.

Shortly before she was dismissed, the Boston Globe newspaper reported that the attorney now doubted her innocence. The claim was based on her alleged comments to state trooper, Ray Cipoletta, when she was arrested for drink-driving.

After Ms Sharp had subsequently pleaded guilty to the drunk driving charge she told reporters she was "appalled" by Mr Cipoletta's allegations. She then accused the trooper of propositioning her. Mr Cipoletta responded by demanding an apology and threatening legal action.

The three remaining lawyers said they had "unequivocal confidence" in Woodward's innocence.

Her British lawyer, Paul Barrow, backed the sacking: "It was an example of absolute gross breach of client confidentiality in discussing anything about the case, irrespective of what was said — which we regard as complete rubbish.

"It was an unnecessary and unfortunate twist to a poor girl waiting with bated breath to the outcome of her appeal. It is very unfair."

In Brief

MILLIONS of bottles and cans of potentially contaminated soft drinks were withdrawn from sale after traces of benzene, a cancer-causing chemical, was found in supplies of carbon dioxide used to make the drinks.

RAILTRACK is expected to sign a contract that will rescue the £5.4 billion Channel tunnel rail link by agreeing to financial backing for the first stage of the track.

MORE than 900 women who graduated from Cambridge before 1948 are to receive their degrees with the pomp and ceremony previously denied them because of their gender.

THE Government has rejected calls to extend planned penalties for race-hate crimes to include homophobic assaults, amid fears that the move would "blur the anti-racist message".

A 12-YEAR-OLD boy became the youngest person on the new register of sex offenders after a jury found him guilty of raping a five-year-old girl.

FEARS that the Lottery would cut into charitable giving were proved unfounded as the Charities Aid Foundation reported an 8 per cent increase in income last year. Meanwhile the Lottery reported a 14 per cent surge in profits to £80 million a year, despite a fall in sales.

THE Government is set to boost the incomes of Britain's one million poorest pensioners by restoring the link with average earnings broken by the Conservatives 18 years ago.

THE Rev Andrew Swindells, a chaplain at Tonbridge School in Kent, has been charged in Germany with importing child pornography.

HOPES of an end to the beef ban rose when the European Commission said it would formally recommend that British beef exports should be allowed again later this year.

TOM WHITTAKER, who lost his right foot after a car crash 19 years ago, has conquered Mt Everest on his third attempt.

EUROPEAN Union ministers have agreed that a driving disqualification in one member state will apply in the 14 others.

EXELON, a medicine for treating Alzheimer's disease, was launched after promising results from the biggest trial undertaken into a drug for the disease.

WILLIAM CONDRY, the countryman and Guardian writer, has died at the age of 80.

Shake-up of prosecution service

Clare Dyer

A NEW chief executive will move into the beleaguered Crown Prosecution Service this week to start a massive shake-up after a damning report into the tenure of Dame Barbara Mills as Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mark Addison, former private secretary to Baroness Thatcher, will start work on a root-and-branch reorganisation of the £300 million-a-year service, shifting power from the London headquarters and into the hands of local prosecutors in 42 new areas.

Dame Barbara, who has been DPP since 1992 and whose contract expires next April, has agreed to stand down as soon as her successor is appointed. The long-awaited report from a team headed by Sir Iain Glidewell, a retired appeal court judge, concludes that a 1993 reorganisation of the service under Dame Barbara was "a mistake". The organisation had become "too centralised and bureaucratic".

It recommends freeing senior lawyers from paper-pushing and putting them back in the courts prosecuting criminals.

It says: "In various respects there has not been the improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of the prosecution process which was expected to result from the setting up of the CPS in 1986."

Sir Iain's inquiry was set up by Labour when it came to power last year, to address accusations that the CPS discontinued too many prosecutions, downgraded charges so cases could be heard more cheaply in the magistrate's court rather than the crown court, and had too many cases thrown out by judges. The report found the highest rates of discontinuation were for the serious charges of violence against the person and criminal damage, and the lowest for motoring offences. Likewise, the few statistics available showed downgrading of charges happened most often in cases of serious crime, public order offences and traffic accidents causing death.

More than half of all acquittals in crown court result from the judge throwing the case out or directing the jury to acquit. Though there were often good reasons, such as a witness failing to appear, "the statistic is a cause for concern," the report says, adding CPS performance "is not as good as it should be".

Sir Iain's team found that the 1993 reorganisation welded the service into a national body. "Nevertheless we believe that the price paid in the over-centralisation of management was too great . . . We estimate that the top 400 lawyers in the CPS spend less than a third of their time on casework and advocacy. We think this is undesirable."

The inquiry was unable to assess whether the CPS was to blame for a fall in convictions, because statistics were contradictory: Court Service figures showed a decline in convictions between 1986 and 1995; CPS statistics showed the opposite. The report calls for one set of figures.

Dame Barbara Mills has agreed to stand down early

Garvaghy Road riot spells trouble

Guardian Reporters

AN RUC woman officer was seriously injured last weekend by an explosive device thrown during heavy rioting in Portadown as security forces attempted to hold back nationalists objecting to an Orange Order march.

The unnamed officer was injured when a pipe bomb was hurled in disturbances during which at least three plastic bullets were fired. Police and soldiers were attacked with petrol bombs and bricks as they tried to keep the sides apart on the mainly Catholic Garvaghy Road. Eleven police officers and at least three civilians were hurt.

The rioting, which lasted for two hours, will be seen as a worrying precursor to what may come in July when Orangemen attempt to parade along the Garvaghy Road to Drumcree church, scene of serious clashes in recent years.

The march — if it goes ahead — is expected to be the first serious challenge by those opposed to the Good Friday agreement, ratified by 70 per cent of voters in last month's referendum.

The trouble started when a parade of junior Orangemen returning from a march in Bangor, Co. Down, walked along the mainly Protestant lower end of the Garvaghy Road. RUC lines tried to keep several hundred nationalists away from the parade. The protest was organised by the Garvaghy Road Residents Coalition, led by former republican prisoner Brendan McKenna.

The rioting occurred as it emerged that three republican splinter groups opposed to the Northern Ireland peace process held a summit meeting to discuss uniting under a central command to continue their terror campaign.

The meeting between the Irish National Liberation Army, the Continuity IRA and the newest group, the Real IRA, took place in Dundalk, near the Northern Ireland border. The groups agreed to increase co-operation and pass bomb-making materials to each other.

Meanwhile a controversial invitation to Sinn Fein to attend a royal garden party badly misfired when its leaders, Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, snubbed the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, and turned it down.

They refused to attend a reception this week with the Prince of Wales at Hillsborough Castle, the Queen's official residence in Northern Ireland — citing as their reason his honorary title as colonel-in-chief of the Parachute Regiment, notorious among republicans for its part in the Bloody Sunday killings in Derry in 1972.

The two raised Bloody Sunday as a counter to Unionists who had protested against their presence on the grounds that Prince Charles should not have been put in the position by Ms Mowlam of meeting representatives of Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA, which assassinated his great-uncle, Lord Mountbatten, in 1979.

The Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, described the invitation as "insensitive" and the independent Ulster MP, Robert McCartney, said: "Sinn Fein are treating with contempt an offer that was made by the contemptible."

Sinn Fein earlier nominated Gerry Kelly, the Old Bailey bomber and Maze escaper, to fight for a seat in the Northern Ireland assembly. Gerry Adams was also among the 10 party members chosen to contest Belfast constituencies in the June 25 election.

Mr Kelly's inclusion is intended to soothe hardliners queasy about the party's historic decision to take its seats, abandoning 30 years of abstentionism.

The assembly will have 108 members, six each elected in Northern Ireland's 18 parliamentary seats by single transferable vote.

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EU leadership snub for Blair

THE European parliament in Brussels last week delivered an unprecedented snub to Britain and the Blair government, voting down a resolution which congratulated the UK presidency for its stewardship of the European Union Council of Ministers and its preparations for this month's Cardiff summit, *writes Martin Walker in Brussels.*

The defeat was a shock because Labour MEPs are the biggest single group in the 625-seat parliament, and its allies on the left and in the Greens usually mount a comfortable majority.

But resentment over the way the UK presidency mishandled the launch of the euro and the row over the European Central Bank, along with widespread suspicion of its spin-doctor tactics, led to the defeat.

Leading the attack Tory Euro-leader Edward McMillan Scott lashed out at the "Robin Reliant" EU leadership, calling it "underpowered and running on three wheels". He added: "The fact is that our continental colleagues have finally seen through the New Labour rhetoric."

The defeat was a particular blow to the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, who had asked for the parliament's support. But the vote was 245-223 against the resolution.

A number of factors went into the vote, led by the tactical cunning of the Tories in setting up a procedural ambush. But the row over the euro, Mr Blair's perceived preference for President Clinton and the US over Europe, and the failure of Britain to develop a coherent EU foreign policy in the Middle East and elsewhere all played a part.

This would all be a storm in a tea cup were it not for the pledges and efforts the Blair government has made to persuade sceptics in Brussels that Britain wants to be "a partner in leadership in Europe". The honeymoon appears to be over.

Lawrence case police chief admits ignorance

Amelia Gentleman

THE policeman heading the Stephen Lawrence murder inquiry admitted last week that he failed to arrest key suspects at the first opportunity because he had misunderstood a basic point of criminal law.

The admission of ignorance by a detective superintendent who had led other murder inquiries during a 30-year career was met with incredulity by relatives of the murdered teenager.

Although the names of four suspects had been given to the police within hours of the racist murder of the black student, it was two weeks before three of them were arrested. The inquiry has heard that this delay meant police were unable to collect certain forensic evidence.

Detective Superintendent Brian Weeden's mistake was compounded by the failure of another officer to pass on crucial information, the inquiry heard.

Mr Weeden was appointed to head the murder investigation three days after the killing, and led a team of officers for 18 months. He claimed he had not realised he had the power to arrest the main suspects as soon as he had "reasonable grounds for belief" of their guilt.

He said it was only recently — after receiving legal advice — that he realised the arrests could legitimately have been made earlier.

Mr Weeden's admission was greeted with anger by Stephen's father, Neville Lawrence. "I am sick and disgusted to hear a senior police officer of 30 years' experience admit that he did not know the police powers to arrest," he said. "First of all they say it was lack of information. Now they are saying they didn't know the law. What next?"

The Lawrence family's QC, Michael Mansfield, asked Mr Weeden: "Do you find that it is rather disturbing that it has taken you all this time to recognise a basic tenet of criminal law?"

Mr Weeden, who retired in 1994, conceded: "I think it is regrettable."

He said later that suspects in the murder, which took place in Eltham, southeast London, in April 1993, might have been arrested earlier had he been aware of evidence provided by an eyewitness.

A police informant referred to as "Grant" had told one of Mr Weeden's officers in the days following the murder that a 17-year-old — known only as B — had seen the killing from a passing bus and could identify some of the suspects.

Although B was interviewed and statements were taken from him much later, Mr Mansfield revealed that Grant had passed B's name and address to Detective Sergeant John Davidson very soon after the murder.

Mr Weeden admitted that the information provided by B combined with that of another witness, K, would have given him the evidence he needed to arrest "within hours".

Five youths were eventually charged but none was convicted.



Emperor Akihito's coach passes protesters lining The Mall in London PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL WEEVER

Veterans turn backs on emperor

John Ezard

DESPITE weeks of official efforts to spin, cajole and argue their case out of existence, 1,500 Far East prison camp victims had their angry day in London last week — and left an indelible image of shock and humiliation on the faces of Japanese VIPs passing them in royal procession.

The Japanese Emperor Akihito was half-screened from them at the last moment by the thick glass of a closed carriage. But the baffled consternation of dignitaries travelling in open coaches to Buckingham Palace could not be concealed.

They stared at the veterans' turned backs as a ripple of boos, V-signs and scattered cries of "shame" spread to other sections of the crowd of tens of thousands watching Akihito pass with the Queen along The Mall.

At the palace, like earlier emperors, Akihito received a Garter ribbon for chivalry from the Queen. But he was, unlike previous emperors, dogged by street protest.

Outside Westminster Abbey several hundred ex-Japanese prisoners of war and internees aged between 60 and over 80 again turned their backs as he arrived to lay a wreath on the Grave of the Unknown Warrior. Many wore white sashes and red gloves to drive home their view that the Japanese government will have blood on its hands until it pays compensation and apologises fully for wartime atrocities.

Younger demonstrators joined them. Mark Cribb, aged 29, from Reigate, Surrey, waved a placard saying: "Third World debts aren't too old to count. But disgusting torture is buried under a Japanese car factory."

But an overwhelming majority of the British public felt it was "important to forgive" Japan, according to a NOP poll issued by the Japanese embassy in London last week.

Later, facing a further two days of demonstrations in Britain, Akihito delivered a speech which his aides described as "a very big step" — an expression of feeling which might well be unique in Japanese history.

Addressing a state banquet at Buckingham Palace, he said: "It truly saddens me that the relationship so nurtured between our two countries should have been marred by the second world war.

"The Empress and I can never forget the many kinds of suffering so many people have undergone because of that war.

"At the thought of the scars of war that they bear, our hearts are filled with deep sorrow and pain.

"All through our visit here, this thought will never leave our minds. We sincerely hope that such a history will never be repeated between our two nations."

In a warm reply to him, the Queen spoke of a conflict with memories that still caused pain today. But these memories had also acted "as a spur to reconciliation".

After hearing a draft of the Emperor's speech, Martyn Day, the solicitor arguing the veterans' compensation claim, said: "It goes no further than the expressions of regret we have already had."

The Mall protest came at the climax of a state welcome on a rare scale of pageantry. It involved 1,000 troops, a 62-gun salute, and the bands of four Foot Guard regiments. Japanese embassy officials distributed Japanese and British flags.

Heads gain budget role

John Carvel

THE Government completed the Tories' revolution in education when it announced plans to delegate 100 per cent of the schools budget to headteachers and governing bodies, leaving local education authorities with a tightly controlled administrative role.

Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, told the National Association of Head Teachers conference in Eastbourne that every state school would get the financial freedoms previously reserved for the grant-maintained sector, established in 1988 as a haven for schools wanting to escape education authority control.

Heads will take over wide-ranging responsibilities, and schools will get their own bank accounts and keep the interest earned on any deposit of public funds.

Mr Byers said they would be able to buy back services from the education authority if they seemed good value for money. Instead of opting out of local authority control, they would have discretion to opt back in for particular functions.

Meanwhile David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said a teacher recruitment crisis is threatening to play havoc with the Government's plans to cut class sizes and raise educational standards.

Graduates were turning away from teaching as a career, and nearly one-third of the 15,000 places for training as secondary school teachers would not be filled this autumn.

Survey shows Internet fears

IT IS supposed to be the answer to our seemingly endless quest for knowledge, a limitless source of entertainment, and even a means of socialising, *writes Sarah Hall*.

But far from embracing the brave new world of the Internet, most Britons view it with fear and suspicion, a report published last week reveals. Fears that it aids fraud, creates unsociable computer nerds and cultivates porn addicts, abound among the technophobic public.

The survey, by the consumer magazine Which? Online, found people were most concerned about the accessibility of pornography and other illegal materials, with nearly six out of 10 (58 per cent) believing it undermined morality and 72 per cent in favour of regulating.

One in three believed the Internet posed a threat to national security. Nearly a quarter (22 per cent) suggested it spawned unsociable computer "anoraks" in danger of losing their grip on reality, and represented a grave threat to traditional family life.

The report found only 14 per cent of the nation — some 7 million people — were Internet users. But interest is burgeoning: half signed on in the past year.

Users cited education and business reasons for going online initially, but then e-mailed friends and family, surfed for leisure information and downloaded software.

Union row looms over minimum wage

Ewen MacAskill and Seamus Milne

UNIONS were squaring up for a battle with the Government last week after a recommendation that the minimum wage be set at £3.60 an hour — a figure welcomed by employers' representatives but substantially lower than the unions had been fighting for.

Tony Blair received the long-awaited figure from the Low Pay Commission, which was established by the Government last June to decide on a fair minimum wage. The figure for workers aged between 18 and 21 will be lower — about £3.20.

Without wanting to denigrate the success of achieving the principle of a minimum wage, union leaders expressed dissatisfaction at its level. Rodney Bickerstaffe, leader of the country's biggest union, Unison, who has been at the forefront of the struggle, said the prospect of a floor under wages at last was "absolutely welcome". But he added: "£3.60 for an hour of anybody's life at the end of the 20th century in one of the richest countries on earth is not something to be proud of."

Ken Cameron, the leftwing leader of the Fire Brigades Union, described the figures as "a disgrace". He said employers were likely to sack younger workers when they qualified for the higher rate.

Mr Blair will have to decide whether to go along with the recommendation, though it is unlikely he will reject a figure set by a body he set up. The unions will hope he is open to manoeuvring. They have been fighting for a figure between £4 and £4.61, but employers argued against, insisting that companies would have to shed jobs or would refuse to take on workers at that rate.

Sir Colin Marshall, chairman of the Confederation of British Industry, welcomed the figure. "The CBI would find anything between £3.50 and £3.60 acceptable. At that level it is workable."

The minimum wage has been fought over for years, with the Tories claiming it would increase unemployment. Labour gave a manifesto commitment to introduce one, but did not specify the rate.

A minimum wage is common place elsewhere in Europe but John Major's government secured an opt-out to allow Britain exemption from its introduction. Low pay was an issue in both the past two general elections.

Doctors ignored baby death toll

Sarah Boseley

BRITAIN'S biggest medical disciplinary inquiry ended dramatically last week when three doctors were found to have risked babies' lives by continuing with heart operations even though their death rates were well above average.

The case has enormous consequences for the self-regulation of doctors and the autonomy of hospital trusts. James Wisheart, aged 60, was not only the senior children's heart surgeon but also medical director of the United Bristol Healthcare Trust. James Roylance, aged 67, was its chief executive, and Janardan Dhasmana, aged 58, was the junior surgeon. None of them listened to colleagues urging that the operations should stop — warnings that continued for five years.

The General Medical Council (GMC) looked at 53 operations on babies, 29 of whom died and four of whom were brain-damaged. By the time of his last hole-in-the-heart operation on a baby, Mr Wisheart's mortality rate had reached 60 per cent, compared with a national average at the time of 14 per cent. In the arterial switch procedure, to correct a back-to-front heart, Mr Dhasmana had a two in three death rate, compared with the national average of one in 10.

After a record seven months of hearings, the GMC's professional standards committee concluded last week that the operations on six babies, five of whom died, should not have taken place.

But the parents of children who died or were brain-damaged during heart operations at the Bristol Royal Infirmary denounced the GMC investigation. They claimed the committee had examined "only the tip of the iceberg". Malcolm Curnow, one of the members of the Bristol Children's Heart Group, said he knew of 91 children who were dead or damaged.

Acknowledging that justice needs to be seen to be done, the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, has been discussing with the parents the scope of the independent inquiry he has promised, even though the GMC will not decide what action to take against the doctors — it could strike them off, admonish or clear them — until later this month.

The parents believe the GMC should not have been allowed to police its own. The committee did not look at brain-damaged children, and its traditional remit did not allow it to investigate the competence of the surgeons, even though Mr Wisheart was said to be too slow and Mr Dhasmana was alleged never to have "got beyond the learning curve" in operations on tiny babies.

A distraught Jim Stewart, father of Ian, who was the only brain-damaged child to be considered in the original charges but whose case was later struck out, interrupted Sir Donald Irvine, president of the GMC, as he gave his ruling, denouncing "this sham of a hearing".

The parents allege that the surgeons' high rates of death and brain-damage were known to the medical profession and yet nothing was done for years. This context was not explored at the GMC.

Two cardiologists and an anaesthetist working at the Bristol Royal Infirmary at the time have received what are known as "Chapter XV letters" from the GMC, warning that their conduct may be open to question. Their lawyers advised them not to give evidence at the GMC inquiry as a result.

Medical bodies have set extensive reforms in train. Stephen Bolsin, the anaesthetist at the hospital who did his best to get the operations stopped by circulating his data to colleagues, was tarred as a whistle-blower and left for a job in Australia, alleging he was frozen out of the profession in Britain.

The Department of Health has already warned the profession that it is no longer acceptable for doctors to be a law unto themselves.

The British Medical Association and the Royal Colleges, reading the writing on the wall, have in the past few weeks issued guidance to doctors, urging them to audit themselves.

They and the GMC have told doctors that whistle-blowing on inadequate colleagues is not dishonourable but a duty.

Hague alters attack with shadow cabinet reshuffle

Michael White

WILLIAM Hague this week admitted the failure of the Conservatives' first year in Opposition when he reshuffled his shadow team to bring more effective fire to bear against the most vulnerable points of New Labour's defences.

The most dramatic signal of Mr Hague's determination to expose Tony Blair's inability to deliver all he promised in his famous "five early pledges" was the promotion of the combative ex-prisons minister, Ann Widdecombe.

The woman who ruined Michael Howard's leadership hopes with the phrase that he had "something of the night" about him, will now be expected to do the same to the street-smart Frank Dobson — whose health team has yet to reverse rising hospital waiting lists.

But Mr Hague also gave a key post to the acerbic Francis Maude, who replaces the lacklustre Peter Lilley as shadow chancellor, with the job of tracking Gordon Brown. Mr Lilley becomes deputy leader.

The equally cerebral David Willetts is one of six new names to join the shadow cabinet. He takes over the education portfolio from Stephen Dorrell. Michael Howard (foreign affairs) and John Redwood (trade), both rottweilers of the right and relatively successful in an underpowered team, stay in post.

Sir Norman Fowler, the Great Survivor of Tory reshuffles for 25 years, takes over Sir Brian Mawhinney's Home Office portfolio, while Gillian Shephard, who changed her mind about stepping down, takes his, shadowing John Prescott.

Mr Hague's personal ratings have slipped from minus 15 to minus 25 points, while his party has slipped from 27 to 26 per cent against Labour's steady 55 per cent in the latest Mori opinion poll.

Angela Browning, the Conservative education spokeswoman, last week announced that she would be stepping down from the shadow front bench to provide more support for her autistic son.

Mrs Browning, a 51-year-old management consultant has been MP for Tiverton since 1992. As a Eurosceptic, she was expected to prosper in the Hague era. Instead she announced: "I need to spend more time with my son who is not in good health, and have decided to return to the back-benches."

The MP's move reflects growing awareness of the price of public life. The trend is not confined to women. Sir Norman Fowler, father of two girls, retired — temporarily — from the Cabinet in 1990 to "spend more time with his family", a remark which prompted the Thatcherite Nicholas Ridley to say he could not imagine anything worse. Privately many MPs agreed.

On the nuclear precipice

PAKISTAN'S nuclear tests have taken South Asia across a dangerous threshold — and the rest of the world with it. The nuclear club has been enlarged for the first time since China joined it in 1964. This time it brings in not one power but two, both locked in deep-set hostility across a common border and with a slow-burning fuse in Kashmir. All this is happening in a post-cold war world where economic rivalry under the flag of globalisation was supposed to replace out-dated territorial antagonisms. Western complacency could hardly have got it more seriously wrong.

That complacency had already given way to a sense of hopelessness after the Indian tests. Suddenly the anti-proliferation rhetoric in which the Nuclear Five clothe their own arsenals was revealed to be threadbare. Last week, on the eve of Pakistan's test, Washington was still dithering about what sort of guarantees might induce Islamabad to exercise restraint. The only one that appeared to suffice — a categorical assurance to come to Pakistan's aid if it were threatened by India — was not on offer. Nuclear guarantees so freely extended in the cold war are no longer available.

The Birmingham G8 summit had already set a dismal example, deploring the "nuclear tide" but failing to come up with any idea on how to turn it back. The only strategy was to urge India to "come into the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty process". No doubt the same invitation will now be extended to Pakistan.

It has only been a few years since the discovery of Saddam Hussein's plans in the Gulf war led to much heart-searching on the subject of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. How much time and effort since then has been expended on exploring Iraq's putative capability. But this concern over "rogue" states has been a diversion from the real task of constructing an international environment that would deter those with more sober, but equally alarming, nuclear intentions. It is not simply that India and Pakistan have lifted themselves above the nuclear "threshold". It is that by doing so they have reduced whatever deterrent value that threshold may have in future. It is unlikely that the two countries will line up readily to accept the CTBT, but if they do, will this not legitimise the route they have pioneered for others to follow?

The charge of double standards against the Nuclear Five remains unanswerable on any principled ground. The question now is not how to persuade new nuclear members to sign up to the CTBT — once they have tested. It is how to dissuade them from beginning to take this road. The only way of doing so is to hold out the prospect of progress towards a nuclear-free world. This would require a declaration endorsing minimum deterrence as an immediate goal — and minimum means tens, not hundreds or thousands, of weapons — plus abolition of nuclear weapons as the longer-term aim. Such a project can no longer be dismissed as starry-eyed or impracticable. The Five are now obliged to answer a simple question: by what other means can more nuclear proliferation be prevented?

The endless crisis of aid

ARE DISASTER appeals a disaster? The plea from Clare Short, Britain's International Development Secretary, for aid agencies to break an "endless cycle" in which the spotlight is switched on crisis areas, and then off again, has added to the debate on humanitarian aid. The aid agencies and many journalists involved have had increasing doubts whether the current approach is effective or even ethical. Few of those attending the conference in London on Dispatches from Disaster Zones, organised by a coalition of the British agencies, would accept Ms Short's argument that emergency appeals should be stopped altogether. In the short run that would either mean failing to get the food or blankets where they were needed, or would force the agencies to dig deeper into reserves with no guarantee of replenishment. Yet there must be disquiet at the way in which human misery can become a "story" overnight and be demoted to a brief item a week later.

Technical and political change over the past decade has made this a very topical issue. There is more television coverage as a result of the satellite explosion and 24-hour news channels: new technology also makes foreign news more immediate. But live reporting means less time to reflect and less time on the air. The print media are more likely now to take their agenda from television and to be influenced by the availability of good pictures. Comment and analysis have suffered. A study of the British TV channels shows that non-news programming on developing countries was reduced from 1,037 hours in 1989-90 to 790 in 1996-97.

The focus of the aid agencies has also changed radically. Setting their own agendas has become more complex as they have become conduits for government and United Nations aid. They now need to adopt a higher and more competitive profile and find themselves embroiled in the business of news management — as reflected in recent controversy over whether or not to launch an appeal for southern Sudan. They are expected to be authorities, yet are often too close to the ground to understand the covert interests manipulating the situation. Is it right, the conference was asked, that they should become, by default, "arbiters of the needs of suffering populations"?

The common complaint in these discussions is the lack of analytical depth and perspective both in reporting by the media and in policy formation by agencies and governments. Rwanda and Zaire have been conspicuous recent examples. As a report from the Glasgow Media Group argues, too often the tragedies were explained in terms of "crude views of Africans and 'tribal' behaviour": the heart of the problem was that "public knowledge of Africa and much of the developing world is very limited". Humanitarian aid is no substitute for development: most famines and disasters are made by man not by nature; war and conflict fill the space that should be occupied by development. Whole populations have been plunged into misery by cynical power alignments, by local corruption or foreign greed, or simply because they don't feature on the geo-strategic map. In the end, development is a profoundly political business: Ms Short has got it right — but it is a message for governments, including her own, not just the agencies.

Giving parrots a bad name

THE OLD phrase about giving people enough rope still applies to some distinguished members of the international loony tendency. Ian Paisley and Newt Gingrich have tightened the noose of ridicule around themselves entirely unaided recently, and in much the same way. Both are inveterate conspiracy theorists, and both are unable to accept that those who argue differently have not been suborned by the devil to do so.

Ulster's Democratic Unionist party leader attacked the Queen as "foolish" for saying that she shared most people's delight at the Good Friday accord. He then accused her of echoing the "voice of her masters" — indeed, of becoming their "parrot". Of course the Queen does have a constitutional duty to support her government's policies, but there is no reason to doubt that she was genuinely pleased at the progress towards peace in Northern Ireland.

Mr Gingrich has run into a storm by making a similar accusation against the US secretary of state. The House Speaker accused Madeleine Albright of behaving as "the agent for the Palestinians" in seeking to broker a compromise between Yasser Arafat and the Israeli government over the issue of the return of West Bank territory. He then whizzed off to Israel to assure the Knesset that Jerusalem is "the united and eternal capital of Israel", thus pre-empting the US position (and that laid down by the Oslo agreement) that its status still remains to be decided.

Mr Gingrich has now blamed the state department for "picking a fight" because it presumed to complain about his remark. He and Mr Paisley have a lot in common, not least the tactic of asking others to apologise when they themselves are in the wrong. But at least he has refrained from taking the parrot's name in vain. This much-maligned bird is a loyal and inventive pet. It may repeat (though often with creative additions) what others say: Mr Paisley, Mr Gingrich and other mega-bores of the ultra-right merely repeat themselves, again and again and again.

Russia's fast rewind through all our pasts

Peter Preston

IN A curious way, Russia has ceased to exist. We see Boris Yeltsin beaming stiffly on the periphery of the Birmingham Summit. We watch Yevgeny Primakov trundled forth to lecture Baghdad or Belgrade. Moscow mafia hoods supplant the KGB in Hollywood's stock cast of villainy. The rest is mostly silent — punctuated occasionally by the dramatics of cabinet sackings or the storm signals of financial crisis.

Who cares about the rouble when India and Pakistan are testing their nukes tit for tat? Who worries about Russian interest rates when Suharto has reeled towards his last exit? But everything connects.

Inside Russia, these past few days, the connections have come with stark clarity. The rouble remains under devastating pressure, hanging day by day on the brink of a devaluation. Interest rates perch at 150 per cent. Unpaid miners can cut the country's railway network in half. Tax receipts dip down to below 20 per cent of GDP. And the men from the International Monetary Fund are dragged, yet again, from their pedestal of studied indifference.

Grigory Yablinsky, the Russian politician the West loves most, pulls the problems chillingly together in the latest issue of the American journal, Foreign Relations. You want clear (and related) nightmares? "The increasing risks of chaos are evident in the rumours of nuclear smuggling. Russia has thousands of tonnes of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Under the rule of a corrupt oligarchy, uranium and anthrax could become black market commodities available to the highest bidder."

You want Indonesian parallels? Yablinsky fears Russia is turning into a state where "freedom of the press and other civil liberties are suppressed, laws are frequently ignored or suspended, and constitutions are obeyed only when convenient. Here corruption is rife from the streets to the halls of power, and personalities, contacts and clans count for more than institutions and laws."

These are real fears: and the diagnosis is widely shared. Indeed, it has become almost the common wisdom in Moscow in the latest débâcle. And the defences of stability, at first sight, appeared pitifully frail.

I've had a seat in a conference stall there, watching the champions come and go. Yeltsin isn't finished. He bounces down the steps like a boxer in training, smiling at his own agility. Look, I can do it. There is a rippling assumption that he will run again in 2000. Unconstitutional? The smile broadens and the thick body heaves with laughter. When he speaks he uses the same word as Yablinksy for the true enemy. Oligarchs.

Who are they? They are earnest young men in black blazers: new millionaires, maybe billionaires, like Boris Berezovsky, who've bought car plants or oil wells at knock-down prices and piled banks and newspapers and television studios on top of them.

They say they pay their taxes. They deny funnelling the cash abroad into familiar bolt holes. One of them, asked the question in open session, says that he gives himself only one fortnight's holiday a year. "Otherwise I am in my office, all day every day, working."

Of course he puts something back into Russia. His oil company has just franchised thousands of petrol stations for one-man businesses to put down roots. He seems vehemently sincere. He began building a career — in a bank — when he was 23. Now he is 34 and still rising. Are these — the oligarchs — the heart of the problem?

Yeltsin seems to think so. He attacks them and their newspapers directly. He's all for a free press. Its just the owners of it and the people who work for it he can't stand. There's no doubt who the men who have the political power say they're fighting: the men with the financial power, the men who they have perversely enriched in the first wave of privatisations. The parcel of blame passes angrily around a tight circle.

On first inspection, then, the key to the problem is lost in deep thickets of recrimination. No one is responsible.

Is there an answer to the Russian conundrum? No more than there is a definition of where the two-headed eagle for Europe and Asia looks first in search of inspiration. Nato draws a line at the border and sits there pensively. A country without a camp is a country without easy identity.

But this is where the gloom begins to turn into something rather different. We assume that democracy, like the market economy, can be learned in a crash course of hardship. We believe transformation can be instant. We kid ourselves.

WHAT does the Russian media remind you of most? Nothing, in their ownership, so much as the British newspapers of the late 18th century: a proliferation of tame organs in thrall to parties or aristocrats or businessmen. They were the halting beginning, not the end, of freedom.

One day the grinder of market forces will probably erase the memory of most of these Russian counterparts too. Moscow and the other big cities will have one or two large, fat journals writing bland, cautious things.

It's this sense of rhythm of due process that escapes so many Western observers and so many Russians themselves. Instant communication means instant actions — and, when that fails, instant disillusion. Too damned quick. The arch reformers, like Yablinsky, want a mould that can be formed in a trice. You're either the United States today, or you're a nuclear Indonesia. But what I think I glimpsed was something rather more interesting — a pattern of evocations across decades, even centuries. Compare the oligarchs with the crude tycoons who built the US. Compare Yeltsin with Teddy Roosevelt. Compare Moscow's mayor with New York's Fiorello La Guardia. The time scales dance back and forth — and only those who are blind to them fail to see.

Russia hasn't ceased to exist. Russia is one version of our own past and of our future unrolling day by absorbing day in a world that has forgotten to remember how to pause and wait.

Albanians divided over plight of brethren

Christophe Châtelot in Tirana

"I'M OFFERING 10,000 leku [$65, an average monthly salary] to my brothers in Kosovo," announced a businessman and son of the chairman of the Suleiman Vokshi Cultural Association, which had organised the meeting. His generosity was applauded by the crowd, but there was hardly a rush to follow his example. An old-age pensioner who had lived in Kosovo promised to donate his next pension payment to the cause. A lorry driver said: "Let's not wait for the state to act, let's get out and fight the Serbian coloniser in Kosovo."

The sparse gathering, which looked more like a meeting of retired folk than an association of activists, clucked their disapproval.

The collection of funds for the Kosovo Albanians organised at the community centre in the port of Durrës, 30km west of the capital Tirana, did not get far. The organisers went back to the beginning: how to make ordinary Albanians aware of the situation of the 2 million ethnic Albanians in Kosovo exposed to attacks by Serbian police?

Since the initial emotion caused by the violent attacks in Kosovo in February and March subsided, the Albanians have hardly been exercised by the plight of the Kosovars. "Patriotic feeling is feeble," said Fatos Kongoli, a writer. "People are concerned mostly with working out their own day-to-day problems . . . For historical reasons Kosovars and Albanians are not really that close to one another."

At the end of the second world war and following the break with Tito's Yugoslavia, Enver Hoxha locked Albania behind its borders. The bridges between the two neighbouring communities were destroyed. Despite the break-up of Yugoslavia and communism's collapse in Albania in 1991, relations between the communities in Albania and Kosovo have not been close.

Ethnic Albanians in Pristina await the results of talks on the future of the province PHOTO: PETR JOSEK

The Kosovars, richer and more knowledgeable about the laws of the market economy, looked down on the Albanians. "The platonic love was replaced by disillusionment, incomprehension, and sometimes even hostility," said another writer, Fatos Lubonja.

In the past few months, however, Albanians have been moved by television pictures of Kosovars killed by Serbian police. "There's an underlying sympathy with Kosovo," said Moikom Zeqo, director of the National History Museum and organiser of a travelling exhibition of photographs of the mutilated bodies of Kosovo massacre victims.

So far Fatos Nano's Socialist government has been careful not to fan nationalist sentiments. It is dutifully toeing the line adopted by the contact group — the United States, France, Italy, Britain and Russia — for the former Yugoslavia. "The right solution would be for Kosovo to become a republic within Yugoslavia," suggests the Albanian foreign minister, Paskal Milo.

Officially, at least, the government says there can be no question of backing the Kosovars' claims to independence. Privately, though, an aide to the president, Rexhep Mejdani, expressed doubts that Kosovo's ethnic Albanians would be satisfied with autonomous status within Yugoslavia. "The Albanian government has opted for reason . . . and money," explained a Western diplomat. In a country where the per capita GDP is less than $700, the government is counting on international aid: at least $640 million is expected by the end of 2000.

"We don't trust Europe to resolve the Albanian problem," said Kongoli. "It's European diplomacy that split up the Albanians with the 1912 Treaty of London. It advocates a united Europe, but at the same time tolerates a situation of apartheid."

The united political front is showing signs of cracking. When the first clashes took place in March, President Mejdani and his predecessor, Sali Berisha, walked side by side in Tirana at the head of several thousand people. But Berisha has not got over losing the presidency last July.

"He's a populist who'll exploit the Kosovo issue and the larger one of gathering an Albanian nation scattered in three countries together into a single state," warned Lubonja.

But Berisha knows that the international community and the Albanian public are not ready for such an initiative. "The national idea", said Lubonja, "began fermenting after the independence of 1912. Then communism and the war in Yugoslavia stopped the process in its tracks. The developments in Kosovo have put the subject back in the spotlight."

(May 28)

Warring factions bring fear to Karachi

Françoise Chipaux in Karachi

MASSIH GHAZI'S house stands neat and trim in an unsightly setting of unpaved streets cluttered with piles of garbage and open drains. A small shopkeeper, Massih left India during the partition of 1947 and settled in Pak Colony in 1951.

As a *mohajir* (refugee) — a description favoured by the Muslims who heeded Mohammed Ali Jinnah's call and left India to construct Pakistan have always called themselves — Massih says he is disgusted by the internal warring between the two parties representing his community: the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) headed by Altaf Hussein, who lives in exile in London, and the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM-Haqiqi), a dissident faction run by Afaq Ahmed, a former associate of Altaf Hussein.

The struggle to gain control of districts where the mohajirs are concentrated (they account for 60 per cent of Karachi's 10-12 million inhabitants) is causing blood to be spilt day after day. The struggle has become as criminal as it is political. What the two groups are fighting for, behind the charges and counter-charges, is control of the wealth generated by a city where all kinds of illegal businesses flourish.

"Karachi has developed with aggressive entrepreneurs, combined with a powerful organised criminal movement working with a corrupt government," said an architect who did not want to be identified. "Of the 13,500 buses circulating in Karachi, 11,000 belong to people who have bought them on credit from usurers. Some 60,000 housing units of the annual target of 78,000 are built every year, but only 22,000 of them legally. A parallel government of such proportions cannot function without arms and without raising taxes from the communities that it controls. The wars of the two MQMs represent a struggle between gangs that for years have been developing their turf, which they tax and protect."

Like the other small traders in his neighbourhood, Massih has also been the victim of the gangs' fund-raisers. His only wish is for law and order to be restored and a system established to put an end to the uncertainty that each day brings.

His feelings are shared by Mohammed, a 21-year-old mechanic who lives in another neighbourhood that the two MQMs are fighting over. He has had enough of the battles between activists, who roam through his district after nightfall, demanding money from businesses at gunpoint.

Guns — many left over from the war in neighbouring Afghanistan — find ready buyers: more than a million are circulating in the city.

And the police can't be relied upon. "They are just another armed group, but in uniform," says Massih. "It would be hard to be more corrupt than the police, and in any case, they don't do a thing."

"People are afraid of their police," says Jameel Yusuf, who heads the police-citizens liaison committee. "No government has had the will to reform them."

The provincial government tends to play down the clashes between the MQM factions, which are threatening the ruling coalition. The Muslim League, the party of the prime minister Nawaz Sharif, governs the province of Sind (Karachi is its capital) together with Altaf Hussein's MQM.

The MQM is threatening to pull out of the coalition unless Islamabad puts an end to what it calls the "no-go" areas; that is, neighbourhoods controlled by its rival.

The prevailing insecurity is bad for business, although the region accounts for more than 60 per cent of Pakistan's economy. At the moment, the situation here is more or less stable — "Just one or two political killings a day," says Yusuf — and life is normal in the wealthier parts of the city. But the threat of violent confrontations remains in this city with its mix of Pakistani ethnic groups and more than 2 million illegal immigrants — Afghans, Burmese, Bangladeshis and Iranians.

Pakistan's problems are amplified in Karachi — the law is flouted, communities tend to be marginalised and don't see themselves represented within the state, and the gap is widening between an élite that looks out only for itself and the common people who are struggling to survive.

(May 27)

Gingrich plays the destroyer

EDITORIAL

THOSE who have wrecked the Israeli-Palestinian peace process don't all come from either Binyamin Netanyahu's ultranationalist government or the ranks of the Hamas Islamist militants. One of the most efficient and determined wreckers is an American: Newt Gingrich. He is Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and leader of the Republican majority in Congress. He has clout in Washington. Sadly, he has clout in the Middle East too.

Mr Gingrich recently visited Israel, where he confirmed his determination to make sure that the US unconditionally takes only one side in the dispute. Not Israel's, but that of Israel's extreme right. It is as if this man, elected in Georgia with the support of Christian fundamentalists, had something in common with the nationalist-religious fundamentalism that constitutes the political core of Netanyahu's government.

Gingrich had one consistent message — whatever Netanyahu does, he will always have the backing of the US Congress. It was a position of principle, independent of what the Israeli prime minister might say or do. Gingrich dismissed as blackmail the Clinton administration's (unsuccessful) attempts to force Netanyahu to withdraw from 13 per cent of the occupied West Bank. He even suggested that the US secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, was a "Palestinian agent". In an interview he gave to the Jerusalem Post, the Republican leader also declared that the Palestinians were responsible for stalling the peace process, an "opinion" that runs counter even to that of the Israeli press.

Gingrich had a hard time denying that he advised Netanyahu to push for a showdown with President Clinton. One of Israel's most gifted political commentators, Nahum Barnea, said that the positions Gingrich has adopted made Netanyahu "owner of the US Congress". In short, with Gingrich's help, the Israeli prime minister has himself become an active figure in the Washington power game and is helping to determine US policy in the Middle East. It's a vicious circle: at home, the Democrat Clinton needs the Republican Gingrich, who in return takes advantage of the situation to formulate his own foreign policy.

It's an unprecedented state of affairs that is both unhealthy and dangerous. Contesting his country's foreign policy, the Speaker of the Congress discredits himself as a statesman. Should he one day be tempted to enter the presidential race, it will have to be remembered that he tried — and unfortunately succeeded in part — to bring US Middle East policy into line with Israeli extremism.

(May 28)



Aiming to raise the spirit level

Whisky's market power is forcing cognac producers to change their tactics, writes **Pascal Galinier**

HIGH-quality grape brandy makers in southwestern France are scrambling for a share of the rapidly growing whisky market. Eight months after it was taken over by Bernard Arnaud's company LMVH, cognac producer Hennessy is back on the offensive and has come up with five new brandy-based drinks.

"My competitors are not the other cognac producers, but the makers of other spirits," says Christophe Navarre, aged 39, who was recently appointed chairman and managing director of this 200-year-old firm.

Navarre, a Belgian, comes from a beer background. He shocked his former colleagues at the Interbrew brewery when he waved a bottle of Coco-Cola at a marketing strategy meeting and announced: "Gentlemen, here's our main rival!" He went on to turn Leffe beer into a favourite drink among young Belgians.

Navarre is hoping that the same kind of shock therapy will work in the Charente *département*. He is openly and unabashedly taking on cognac's biggest competitors — whisky, gin and vodka. Hennessy is planning to put three new "single-distillery" cognacs on the American market in September in an attempt to counter the success of "single malts", which have been responsible for pushing up sales of Scotch whiskies in the upmarket spirits class.

But the real new product will be a clear young cognac in a small squat container resembling a gin or vodka bottle. It will be called Pure White. The idea is get young drinkers of strong liquor who like to go to bars and nightclubs to adopt the cognac as a long drink. If the trials are satisfactory, the product will be released in supermarkets at the price of a high quality whisky, about $34.

Navarre is determined to use every possible means to achieve his goal of doubling Hennessy's share of the world market in "premium spirits" to 2 per cent (about 270 million cases, each containing a dozen 70cl bottles).

The offensive by the leading cognac maker could shatter many taboos connected with cognac and herald a reconquest of the market. It's not too soon, either. Since 1990 France's leading exporter (cognac accounts for 70 per cent of France's exports of spirits) has been looking for new consumers. In Japan, the second largest market for cognac after the United States, sales reached 28.5 million bottles in 1990, but fell to 18 million in 1997. In the rest of Asia, which had shown great promise in recent years, sales have suffered severely as a result of the financial crisis that began a year ago. As for the US, the boom in the past two years has been in cognacs at the lower end of the market (three stars or VS), which generate more volume but smaller profits than in Asia.

A new strategy is emerging to shift the emphasis back to Europe, which still accounts for 38.6 per cent of sales in volume (50 per cent in 1985), and to France, a market showplace too long abandoned to the "ghetto" of after-dinner liqueurs. Stimulated by a campaign mounted jointly by all French cognac producers — on the theme "Offer your ice cubes a cognac" — the French market is at last bouncing back after a 10-year slump.

Last year 7.9 million bottles were sold in France, 10 per cent more than in 1996. But this was just 8 per cent of the number of bottles of whisky sold in the same period, whereas sales of both drinks were running practically level back in 1970.



Hennessy cognac has come up with new brandy-based drinks

Following Hennessy's example, the other big cognac makers are also preparing to do battle. Rémy-Martin has come up with a blend of cognac and vodka named Platinum, currently being test-marketed in Britain and Germany. Martell (owned by Seagram) is putting out a delicate cognac with a nutty flavour called & Co, which comes in a smart black flask. It, too, is being tried out in Britain, the third largest market for French cognacs.

By offering their product in mixes, cognac makers hope to put an end to the spirit's image as as an inaccessible or outdated luxury. They are also slashing prices. Thanks to its 50 per cent vodka content, Rémy Platinum, for example, is being sold at a cut-rate price of $16 a bottle.

The sight of these venerable cognac producers "slumming" it makes Jean-Paul Lafragette smile. This son of a winegrower from southwestern France had been a lone voice for the past 15 years. In 1983 he marketed a drink named Alizé, which was a blend of cognac and passion fruit juice. Last year Alizé generated a turnover of about $24 million for the joint venture L & L set up by Lafragette and his importer in the US, Kobrand.

Traditional cognac makers reacted by looking down their noses at this intruder in their midst. Today, however, the big producers are looking enviously at the 520,000 cases of Alizé that Lafragette exported to the US last year. To mark last month's Festival of Detective Films in Cognac, Lafragette came up with another new product, XO Beer, an Alsatian beer flavoured with XO cognac of superior category. The region's cognac producers treated it with disdain, but it is said that all of them secretly sampled the drink.

(May 27)

Attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda have been extremely brutal PHOTO: SULEMAN

Uganda moves to rehabilitate war children

Frédéric Fritscher in Gulu

ON THE outskirts of Gulu, capital of Uganda's Northern province, there is a compound surrounded by a wire fence and carefully locked gates. This is the safe haven of 210 Ugandan children, 38 of them girls, who have been through a particularly hellish experience.

From 1995 on, they were kidnapped by the rebels of Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and mostly forced to commit "irreparable" acts before having to accompany their masters to their rear base in Sudan, which supports Kony.

Some 2,000-3,000 of the 10,000 children kidnapped in northern Uganda managed to escape from the LRA. Others were taken prisoner by Ugandan troops in the course of armed clashes.

In the Ugandan government's view, such "fighters" should be considered as children, and the sometimes horrific acts they may have committed are to be put down to the systematic brutality and dehumanising treatment to which they are subjected by the rebels in order to ensure, they remain obedient.

After questioning the child soldiers, Ugandan troops hand them over to two NGOs: the American World Vision and the locally based Gulu District Child Support Organisation (Gusco).

When the child refugees arrive at the Gusco centre, they are given three changes of civilian clothing and all they need in the way of food and bedding. Those suffering from malnutrition get a special diet. The sick, the wounded and those with severe psychological disorders are taken to hospital.

The children are then "put through a routine, which involves waking up, doing the housework, washing, having breakfast and studying in classes until noon," says Béatrice Arach, a voluntary teacher. "Afternoons are devoted to discussions with teachers, drawing, therapeutic activities and, as soon as it gets a bit cooler, to sport."

The children stay an average of six weeks at the centre so as to get used to a normal social life before being sent back to their families — as long as their safety can be guaranteed.

George Omona, head of the centre, says that 1,013 children aged between five months and 19 years went through the Gusco centre in 1997. Most of them were kidnapped in 1995-96, but a number were taken by Kony as early as 1992. They were all tortured. Some were forced to murder their parents or neighbours. A number of the children took part in massacres. They were obliged to kill, torture or commit acts of cannibalism in order to survive.

Omona insists on the need "to organise reconciliation, which has to involve families, clans and even tribes". According to African tradition, a whole clan is responsible for crimes committed by one of its members, even if he is a child.

(May 13)

Blasting into the new order

COMMENT
François Géré

LET us thank India's scientists, engineers and technicians, and the leaders of the ruling Bharatiya Janata party, less for the nuclear tests than for the political lesson they have given. Considerations of regional instability apart, the May 11 and 13 tests signalled the end of an amorphous period known as the "post-cold war". It was characterised by a partial settlement of the Soviet-American confrontation and the relative ease with which the break-up of the Soviet Union was absorbed, particularly in terms of nuclear non-proliferation.

The Indian nuclear tests say bluntly what we already knew but did not dare admit — that we have entered a period of fierce global competition to find our places in the new order of things. No place for India as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council? The old system is entrenched for all time? Well, that's too bad. We're going to assert ourselves in a different way. An archaic conception of power? Maybe. But the West forgets too quickly that there are quite a few cultural divergences around the world when it comes to concepts of power. The nuclear fact is a blunt assertion of other points of view.

Not one test, but five. This demonstration of technical know-how carries a message: "We're competent all along the line — nuclear fission, thermonuclear fission right up to low-energy weapons, the relatively reduced risk of which enables incorporating them in surface-to surface and sea-to-surface missiles."

The Indian tests send political messages to Pakistan, China and the United States. The message to Pakistan is: "You will never play in the Big Power League." This is probably the most worrying part. In this duel of national pride, the Pakistani reaction is likely to touch off a nuclear and ballistics race.

The second message is directed at China. Since 1960 Indian nationalists have been obsessed by the need to get on equal terms with a nation considered to have been given an unfair advantage by post-colonial history. India's intention is not to threaten, but to keep its place in the world order.

Finally, the tests are the first act of an open rebellion against American domination of international diplomacy. For the past two years experts have been pointing out that nuclear non-proliferation was becoming more a matter of stated positions than of reality. In discreet presidential utterances and directives the US has shown that its own nuclear weapons are here to stay. The nuclear option is still open. It is adding new weapons to its nuclear arsenal and reinforcing its technological skills.

India's leaders have drawn their own conclusions. They wanted to create a situation from which there could be no turning back. From now on we are going to have to speak of six nuclear powers. India's move takes us back to the foundations of international relations — the assertion of political identity through independent decisions and freedom of action. Every state must ponder this lesson.

(May 22)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

Misplaced Faith in Nuclear Deterrence

COMMENT
Kenneth J. Cooper and John Ward Anderson

AS THEY engage in a second Cold War, India and Pakistan have been guided by an optimistic reading of the bygone Cold War's history that assumes mutual possession of nuclear weaponry automatically prevents nuclear war, just as it ultimately did during four decades of confrontation between the United States and former Soviet Union.

While placing faith in the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence, leaders of the two hostile neighbors on the Indian subcontinent also expect to avoid other, damaging side effects of the U.S.-Soviet conflict, such as the spiraling costs and escalating tensions resulting from an arms race to establish a strategic edge.

India and Pakistan, for the most part bystanders to the Cold War, also have underestimated the impact that nationalistic passions and fears of being obliterated, once unleashed, can have in a nuclearized rivalry. Rather than risks, the nations mostly see national security in nuclear arms.

These shared perspectives are based partly on an understanding that two of the world's poorest nations cannot easily afford to spend billions of dollars on nuclear weapons and expensive military systems to deliver them.

In the case of India, the attitude is also based on a one-sided view of the developing nation as "dedicated to peace," in the words of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, even though modern India has the world's fourth-largest military and has often bullied its smaller neighbors.

"They say they won't go through the same [kind of] Cold War, but . . . they've made strategic mistakes in the past," said Stephen P. Cohen, a South Asia specialist who teaches at the University of Illinois. "They are no worse than us, but no better, and the stakes are very high."

Scott Sagan, a political scientist at Stanford University, said: "They are taking only the positive aspects of the past experience and saying they'll copy that, and they're assuming they'll avoid the negative aspects. There's no reason only the good news of the past will repeat itself."

Sagan warned that avoiding nuclear war cannot be taken for granted: "It's like walking on thin ice. The fact that the United States and Soviets did it once during the Cold War should not give anyone confidence that it can be done again."

India and Pakistan have managed to leave themselves a couple of plausible ways out of a second Cold War.

Vajpayee's government has dropped hints that India might be willing to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, or make a similar international agreement, if the rest of the world recognizes the nation as a declared nuclear power.

Pakistan would sign the test-ban treaty almost immediately if India did likewise, according to Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan. India and Pakistan said they were willing to resume bilateral negotiations that stalled last year over Kashmir, which both nations claim as their own. The talks could resume in mid-July, when Vajpayee and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif are scheduled to attend a meeting of South Asian leaders in Sri Lanka.

In addition, leaders of Western industrialized nations plan to meet soon to develop an initiative to avert a nuclear-arms race in South Asia. But the international and regional efforts come too late to stop the escalation. India and Pakistan have engaged in an arms race since 1974, when India conducted its first nuclear test.

The intensified competition that last month led both nations to openly cross the nuclear threshold began in 1995, when the Indian government, led by the Congress party, prepared for an underground nuclear test with an election approaching but scuttled its plans in the face of U.S. pressure.

In their recent vows not to repeat the worst of the Cold War, the governments of India and Pakistan have ignored their previous competition to develop nuclear arms and missile systems to deliver them.

"India shall not engage in an arms race. India shall also not subscribe [to] or reinvent the doctrines of the Cold War," Vajpayee's government declared last week in a statement to Parliament.

"The answer for us lies in nuclear deterrence," Shamshad Ahmad, Pakistan's top career diplomat, said after the nation's second round of nuclear tests. "It is not our purpose to enter into an arms race. The history of the Cold War showed that such disastrous races are counterproductive and definitely not sustainable."

Ghafoor Ahmad, deputy leader of a fundamentalist Islamic party in Pakistan, said in an interview, "I don't think there is any danger of nuclear war because nuclear weapons are a deterrent to war."

Ghafoor Ahmad is among opinion-makers in both countries who view nuclear weapons as peacekeepers, even on a tense subcontinent where communal passions have been known periodically to race out of control.

"It keeps peace," Bharat Karnad, an Indian analyst, said recently on a television talk show.

After India conducted underground nuclear tests in May, government officials said they expected Pakistan to do likewise. But as more than two weeks passed, members of Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party began crowing that maybe the Islamic Republic of Pakistan could not muster the necessary technology or would be bought off by a generous aid package from the Clinton administration.

With Pakistan's detonations of nuclear devices, the mood changed in New Delhi. Jubilation disappeared among members of India's educated elite who had cheered its nuclear tests May 11 and May 13 as a bold expression of national pride.

Opposition members of Parliament, previously hesitant to criticize a politically popular move, are now accusing Vajpayee's government of precipitating an ominous arms race that it had promised to avoid.

Before Pakistan conducted its tests, Indian officials had at times appeared to underestimate the risks of unintentional nuclear conflict, a scenario that had prompted the United States and the former Soviet Union to install elaborate systems of command and control over their nuclear arsenals.

Jaswant Singh, a member of a task force drafting plans for a national-security council that is to develop India's nuclear doctrine, had dismissed a foreign reporter's questions about a specialized command and control structure as "a matter of detail."

Nationalistic passions have contributed to shaping the nuclear-arms race between India and Pakistan. Prime Minister Sharif ordered Pakistan's tests despite knowing that the full force of economic sanctions could drive his country into bankruptcy. A group of Pakistani newspaper editors he consulted beforehand acknowledged the economic collapse of the former Soviet Union as a relevant lesson of the Cold War but nonetheless voted overwhelmingly for the government to proceed with tests.

Reacting to Pakistan's response to India's tests, Bal Thackeray, who leads a Hindu nationalist partner in the 14-party coalition government, urged India to produce a devastatingly powerful type of nuclear weapon — hydrogen bombs.

WE URGE PAKISTAN AND INDIA TO FOLLOW THE PATH OF RESTRAINT...

AUTH

Starr Seeks to Speed Up Privilege Ruling

Peter Baker

INDEPENDENT counsel Kenneth W. Starr asked the Supreme Court last week to intervene on an emergency basis to settle his fight with President Clinton over executive privilege, adopting the same legal tactic and reasoning that Watergate prosecutors did in similar circumstances a quarter-century ago.

In a maneuver employed only a handful of times in U.S. history, Starr asked the justices to bypass the appeals court and take the case directly from the district court, which has ruled that Clinton cannot use the privilege to shield top aides from testifying in the Monica S. Lewinsky investigation. Under the accelerated timetable Starr suggested, the high court would hear oral arguments on June 29.

"This case is of high moment," Starr wrote to justify his request in his petition. "It is strongly in the nation's interest that the case be resolved quickly so that the grand jury's investigation can move forward at the earliest practicable date."

The move came on Thursday last week, a busy day for the four-month-old investigation. In Los Angeles, Starr summoned Lewinsky to a federal office near her father's home to provide fingerprints and handwriting samples, the first direct contact she has had with investigators since she was snared in an FBI sting January 16.

In Washington, a judge ruled that Starr can have records of Lewinsky's book purchases while Clinton friend Vernon E. Jordan Jr. returned to the grand jury. And in Alexandria, Virginia, Starr opened another front in his investigation, using another grand jury to hear witnesses in a jurisdiction that prosecutors may prefer if they decide to indict Lewinsky.

The executive privilege petition, though, heralded a constitutional battle as the Supreme Court was asked to address the murky limits of presidential secrecy for only the second time. Throughout his 14-page filing, Starr patterned his argument and even his proposed timetable after those used by special prosecutor Leon Jaworski in persuading the Supreme Court in 1974 to force Richard M. Nixon to turn over the secret Oval Office tapes that forced him out of office.

"As with Nixon . . . this case is exceedingly important," Starr wrote, adding, "this litigation involves fundamental constitutional issues arising out of the doctrine of separation of powers."

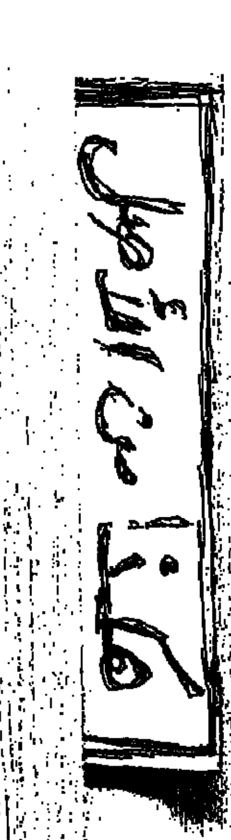
The White House declined to comment on Starr's petition. "We have just been served with the papers and we have not yet had a chance to fully review them," said spokesman James Kennedy.

Under the unusually compressed schedule requested by Starr, the White House would have to respond this week to the request for certiorari. If the court then agrees to hear the case, Starr asked the justices to set a June 15 deadline for both sides to file briefs simultaneously and then June 22 for each to respond to the other. Arguments would be held June 29.

Leapfrogging a case past an appeals court on such an expedited schedule is almost never done. In his petition, Starr could cite only five times the Supreme Court has agreed to do so, dating back to 1947; in addition to U.S. v. Nixon , the other cases involved such issues as impending steel and mine strikes, and the question of Iranian assets during the Tehran hostage crisis.

The court usually holds oral arguments from October to April and rarely schedules a case even for May or early June. But it already has made one exception this term for Starr — agreeing to expedite a dispute over attorney-client privilege related to conversations the late White House deputy counsel Vincent W. Foster Jr. had with his lawyer before his suicide. Oral arguments are scheduled for next week on whether the attorney-client privilege dissolves when a client dies.

While the justices are likely to consider the questions presented in Starr's latest petition important, such a fast-track schedule may be difficult for them to meet. With just weeks left in its regular term; 30 cases involving some of the most contentious dilemmas have yet to be decided. Moreover, several justices likely already have made plans to leave the country during the summer.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Right-Minded Individualist

OBITUARY
Barry M Goldwater



Barry Goldwater . . . His failure in the 1964 presidential election paved the way for Ronald Reagan's triumph in 1980

BARRY M. Goldwater, 89, a five-term Arizona senator and a champion of conservatism whose 1964 presidential candidacy launched a revolution within the Republican Party, died on Friday last week at home in Paradise Valley, a suburb of Phoenix.

Goldwater, who retired from the Senate in 1986 as one of his party's most respected elder statesmen, suffered a resounding defeat when he ran for president. But his efforts helped prepare the way for the election of another conservative Republican, Ronald Reagan, as president in 1980.

Goldwater carried only six states and 36 percent of the popular vote in 1964. After the election, most analysts and commentators concluded that the Republican Party was hopelessly divided, and Goldwater and his conservative philosophy were all but politically dead.

In fact, he had wrested control of the GOP from the Eastern liberal wing that had dominated it for years. By 1980, he was acknowledged as founder of a conservative movement that had become a vital element in mainstream Republican thinking and a major ingredient in Reagan's political ascendancy. It was a 1964 speech delivered on behalf of Goldwater that brought Reagan to national prominence and helped launch his political career.

During his 1964 presidential campaign, Goldwater was attacked by Democrats and opponents within his own party as a demagogue and a leader of right-wing extremists and racists who was likely to lead the United States into nuclear war, eliminate civil rights progress and destroy such social welfare programs as Social Security.

But that perception mellowed with time. Goldwater returned to the Senate in 1969 and went on to serve three more terms. Long before his retirement he had come to be regarded as the Grand Old Man of the Republican Party and one of the nation's most respected exponents of conservatism, which he sometimes defined as holding on to that which was tested and true and opposing change simply for the sake of change.

In all, he served 30 years in the Senate, but he was out of office for four years after losing his bid for the presidency, and he was in a political limbo for almost 10 years after that defeat. He reemerged during the Watergate crisis of the early 1970s.

Then, the bluntness and candor that had so often damaged Goldwater's presidential campaign a decade earlier, and his outspoken and harsh criticism of Richard M Nixon's failure to deal with the growing Watergate scandal, were among the vital ingredients of his political renaissance.

The president, he charged, had shown "a tendency to dibble and dabble and argue on very nebulous grounds like executive privilege and confidentiality when all the American people wanted to know was the truth."

A quintessential Westerner and a man of great personal charm, Goldwater was an incurable gadgeteer who loved such devices as the electronically operated flagpole at his Arizona home that was rigged to raise the flag at the precise moment it was struck by the rays of the morning sun. He was an enthusiastic ham radio operator, airplane pilot and photographer who loved to take pictures of the people and landscapes of the American West.

He championed a brand of rugged individualism, and he never hesitated to speak his mind. He could be both colorful and profane, and he often said things he later wished he hadn't. "Barry, you speak too quick and too loud," former president Dwight D. Eisenhower once told him," and Goldwater acknowledged Eisenhower was right.

"There are words of mine floating around in the air that I would like to reach up and eat," he once said.

In his personal and political memoirs, With No Apologies, published in 1979, Goldwater observed that his run for the presidency in 1964 "was like trying to stand up in a hammock." He said he knew that his chances of winning were slim and contended that his fellow Republicans cost him any chance he might have had during the battle for the Republican nomination.

"By the time the convention opened, I had been branded as a fascist, a racist, a trigger-happy warmonger, a nuclear madman and the candidate who couldn't win," Goldwater recalled.

That convention, at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, was long remembered for the spectacle of Goldwater partisans drowning out New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller with a chorus of boos and hoots when he addressed the delegates. It was also remembered for Goldwater's own acceptance speech, in which he declared (after Cicero) that "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice and . . . moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."

Goldwater declined to run for a sixth term in the Senate in 1986, and he retired from politics as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Intelligence Committee. "If I had a chance to do it again, I'd do it again," he said at the time.

More than anyone else, he was responsible for the unanimous Senate passage of the Defense Department Reorganization Act of 1986, the last major achievement of his political career. That measure, approved over the objections of the military establishment, streamlined command channels at the Pentagon. It was "the only goddamn thing I've done in the Senate that's worth a damn," Goldwater said.

Bart Barnes

Barry M.Goldwater, politician, born January 1, 1909; died May 29, 1998

Sidetracked on Road to Global Growth

COMMENT
E.J. Dionne Jr.

SOME of what happens in politics is hidden in plain sight. Last month, President Clinton announced a major shift in America's approach to global economics. His ideas would affect how workers and the environment gain protection and whether trade issues are settled in the open or in secret. Almost nobody paid attention.

Clinton's announcement came in a speech before the World Trade Organization in Geneva. There was a time when the address would have been front-page news. It was, for one thing, a direct response to critics of the WTO who accuse it of bowing to the wishes of powerful international companies and making its decisions without any public accountability.

Clinton said that on the matter of secrecy, at least, the critics are right. "We must modernize the WTO by opening its doors to the scrutiny and participation of the public," he declared. "Today, when one nation challenges the practices of another, the proceeding takes place behind closed doors. I propose that all hearings by the WTO be open to the public." Clinton promised the United States would open any proceeding it is part of and challenged other countries to do the same.

For good measure he proposed that private citizens be able to present their views before the WTO — meaning that business or labor people, Ralph Nader or Pat Buchanan, environmentalists or anyone else could raise a ruckus when they thought vital issues were at stake. Since international organizations now play such a big role in every nation's economy, how can they deny the basic right to petition and air grievances?

Calling on the WTO to work more closely with environmentalists and the International Labor Organization to lift standards, Clinton directly borrowed rhetoric from critics of his past trade policies: "We must do more to ensure that spirited economic competition among nations never becomes a race to the bottom — in environmental protections, consumer protections or labor standards. We should be leveling up, not leveling down."

That Clinton's speech got so little coverage may reflect the muffling of his voice by scandal news. But it demonstrates for certain the eclipse of trade as a major public issue after last year's defeat of authority for the president to negotiate trade deals on a "fast track."

In fact, Clinton's new proposals are a direct response to the defeat of fast track. They grow out of ongoing discussions between Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and a group of House Democrats.

Some of Rubin's interlocutors — Rep. David Bonior of Michigan, for example — were sharply critical of Clinton's old approach to trade. But many of them, including Reps. Nancy Pelosi of California and Barney Frank of Massachusetts, are also interested in a "third way" that accepts global markets as a reality but seeks, as Frank put it, "globalization plus civility."

Another sign that opponents of Clinton's past trade policies see him responding to their views came from AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. He praised the speech as "a dramatic turning point in the debate over the rules of globalization."

Commerce Secretary William Daley — a free-trader who served as the administration point man on the North American Free Trade Agreement — acknowledged in an interview last week that "some of our friends on the far right and far left" regard the WTO as "some sort of Trilateral Commission," a powerful body that makes important decisions in secret.

"If we're going to depend on international organizations," Daley said, referring to the WTO and International Monetary Fund, "we'd better not only start defending them, but also deal with the legitimate problems that have come up. . . . We're trying to get this debate on a different level."

Forging a new consensus around global growth with equity would be a major achievement. But the resounding silence that greeted the president's speech suggests that the road there will be long, and that there may be limits on Clinton's ability to lead the journey.

Serbs Step Up Attacks In Kosovo

Christine Spolar in Bajram Curri, Albania

SERBIAN forces have escalated their attacks on ethnic Albanian villages near Kosovo's mountainous border with Albania, burning and shelling homes and sending refugees fleeing, international observers and refugees crossing the frontier said last week.

From vantage points here on the Albanian side of the remote, rugged border, at least three villages in Kosovo's strategic Morina Valley — a suspected transit point for weapons being smuggled from Albania to separatist rebels in Kosovo — were under assault.

Two of the villages — Smodica and Morina — were obscured by smoke on Thursday last week while the third, Ponosevac, came under fire the next day. Explosions could be heard at regular intervals as artillery fire rattled across the valley. The whistle of falling mortar shells had leathery-faced local shepherds, unnerved by the noise, looking up to the sky.

A delegation of Kosovo Albanians, who met with President Clinton at the White House on Friday last week, said the attacks on villages near the border were part of an effort by the Serbs to carve out a strategic zone arching from the Drenica Valley in western Kosovo southward along the Albanian border.

"It is a scorched-earth policy," Veton Surroi, an adviser to Kosovo's ethnic Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova, told the Washington Post. "Our warning to the president was that this is the first stage of war."

At least 200 people have died in Kosovo since late February, when Serbian army and special police forces launched a crackdown against ethnic Albanian guerrillas. Albanians outnumber Serbs by 9-to-1 in Kosovo.

Here in Bajram Curri, the closest Albanian town to the fighting, military officials from Albania and Western Europe have been arriving daily to assess the conflict across the border. The officials say they are concerned about stemming the flow of weapons from Albania to the Kosovo Liberation Army — the province's guerrilla group — through the rocky, tangled, mud passes that crisscross the mountains along the border.

Brig. Gen. Wilhelm Figl, a defense attache for Austria, spent two days here, combing the mountainsides in a four-wheel drive. Figl, who has been responsible for Albania for six years, said the Albanian "military is too weak" to monitor borders or control traffic between the two countries. "They have no materiel, less resources," Figl said. "The situation here can become a real European problem.

"All the signs are that the Serbs are going on with ethnic cleansing in the Kosovo area," Figl said. "It's the way [the Serbs] solve their problems — in Croatia, in Bosnia and now in Kosovo."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
June 7 1998

As Wall Street pats itself on the back, trouble lurks behind the boom, warn **Joel Kotkin** and **David Friedman**

Keep the Champagne on Ice

WITH the Asian dragons vanquished, Wall Street soaring to new heights and U.S. unemployment rates at modern lows, American elites are indulging in an orgy of self-congratulation unmatched since the Roaring Twenties.

"France had the 17th century, Britain the 19th, and America the 20th. It will also have the 21st," gushed real estate magnate and publisher Mortimer Zuckerman in April's Foreign Affairs. In the hip techno-journal Wired, Peter Schwartz and Peter Leyden recently rhapsodized, "We are riding the early waves of a 25-year run of a greatly expanding economy that will do much to solve the seemingly intractable problems like poverty and ease tensions throughout the world." Conservative theorist Irving Kristol, writing in the Wall Street Journal, celebrated the emerging "American imperium."

We have another idea: Hold the champagne. Millennial giddiness may well prove tragically short-sighted. To a large extent, it reflects not a widely shared prosperity but a yuppie narcissism that has snared both mainstream liberals and conservatives — a kind of cross-ideological delusion fueled by rising stock values and a robust demand for well-educated white-collar baby boomers.

This Yuppie Consensus about the nation's new manifest destiny has pushed aside discussion of America's more troubling realities. Increasingly, serious critiques now come only from the fringes of the left and right, groups whose rigid ideologies and unrealistic proposals tend to obscure the questions they are raising about the long-term health of the U.S. economy. Amid the glee about the current boom, who wants to talk about issues such as America's need for more skilled workers or the consequences of growing class divisions in a country that celebrates its belief in equal opportunity and fairness?

A decade ago, anxious Wall Streeters talked about "turning Japanese" to survive. Now Asia's financial implosion is seen as proof that America, and especially Wall Street, was No. 1 all along. This mentality ignores the fact that the ever-increasing flood of imports from Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines — and, more importantly, the slowdown of U.S. exports — will hasten the shift of technology and production jobs from the United States to overseas markets. Such developments may not generate the widespread turmoil long predicted by trade critics on both the left and right, but they will almost certainly erode the fortunes of millions of factory workers and entrepreneurs across the country.

Cash-flush investment funds, for example, relentlessly promote the notion that America's computer sector is an unqualified success. But there are warning signs that all is not well in this innovative industry. From 1989 to 1995, the percentage of foreign-made components in U.S. computer products rose from 42 percent to 65 percent. During that same period, the industry's import of components grew at three times the rate of export. And where does 80 percent of this imported computer equipment come from? Asia, of course.

It's not just computers. In the early 1990s, Japanese auto makers invested heavily in new technology, increased manufacturing capabilities and novel product designs. Their already dramatic U.S. market recovery received an unexpected boost when the Asian currencies took their recent tumble against the dollar, leading to huge sales gains at the expense of premier American-model cars. For the first time in years, Japanese firms built the first and second best-selling cars in America, dethroning Ford's Taurus. Luxury models from Europe and Japan were widely credited with causing a 7 percent decline in General Motors's sales early this year, as the once-dominant company's sales volume fell to its lowest levels in decades.

Then there's the troubling case of Boeing Co., which recently swallowed its last U.S. commercial aircraft rival, McDonnell Douglas Corp. The Seattle-based giant has reported billions of dollars worth of backlogged orders, yet continues to announce job cuts and the shift of production work overseas.

Even if Boeing and other sophisticated manufacturers wanted to keep more production here, they cannot find enough skilled labor. Some of this has been caused by a dramatic drop in the availability of new workers: U.S. labor force growth has dropped by half — from 2.5 percent a year two decades ago to 1.3 percent today. This decline has helped push unemployment to record-low levels, but it has put extreme pressure on employers who need a steady supply of trained workers.

Increasingly, it is the quality of the labor force that presents the most pressing challenge to American industry. The country is not training enough skilled workers to support its manufacturing industries. At Newman Machine Works in Burbank, California, the nation's good economic times have allowed company president Dave Goodreau to increase his shop-floor workforce from eight to 17. He says he could hire 50 more machinists — at salaries close to $10 an hour and more than twice that for experienced workers — if they could be found. "We're paying for the sins of 20 years of decline in the industrial arts in the schools," Goodreau suggested. "The tap water has been shut off. All we get now is a drip, drip, drip." Goodreau has learned firsthand what has been reported: The country faces a shortage of about 24,000 machinists, according to industry estimates.

Perhaps the current economic boom is like a good run at the craps table, with the winners ready to turn tail with the first bad roll

Phil Jakobi, who runs Delco Machine and Gear, an aerospace machining shop in Long Beach, California, says popular culture has made blue-collar work unfashionable among young people. Like Goodreau, he has lost recruiting battles to McDonald's, even though his machine shop jobs come with higher pay, full benefits and company-subsidized training.

As the futurist Herman Kahn observed 15 years ago, American popular culture increasingly rejects the traditions of hard physical labor so critical to the nation's industrial ascendancy over the past century. Even in the popular software and entertainment industries, America is simply not producing the technical talent it needs. The number of U.S. computer science graduates has fallen from a high of 50,000 in 1986 to 36,000 in 1994. The National Science Foundation reported that, in 1995, 30 percent of all R&D (research and development) workers with science and engineering doctorates were foreign-born. One-fifth of all undergraduates in computer-related fields — and half of all doctoral candidates — are citizens of foreign countries. The United States has long attracted foreign students. Now, many are being recruited to stay by U.S. companies that desperately need their skills.

These trends are most pronounced in the high-technology hotbeds of California. Today, one-third of the engineers in Silicon Valley and Orange County are from other countries. Half the skilled employees at special-effects firms such as Los Angeles's Rhythm and Hues are from another country — mostly from East Asia and Europe. "Our ideal person is someone who's very strong in math or engineering or technology, plus has a second degree in art," said Rhythm and Hues founder John Hughes. "Those people are very hard to find and in fact we have to search the world . . . They often just don't exist here."

Skilled immigrants have become a kind of secret weapon for technology firms unable to find the workers they need. But mounting anti-immigrant sentiment and new immigration laws have reduced the number of highly skilled newcomers coming to America. Between 1992 and 1995, the influx of skilled immigrants dropped by 32 percent — and nearly 75 percent in California's Silicon Valley. The Information Technology Association of America estimates there are now 190,000 vacancies for high-tech workers, and the industry could create a million more new jobs over the coming decade.

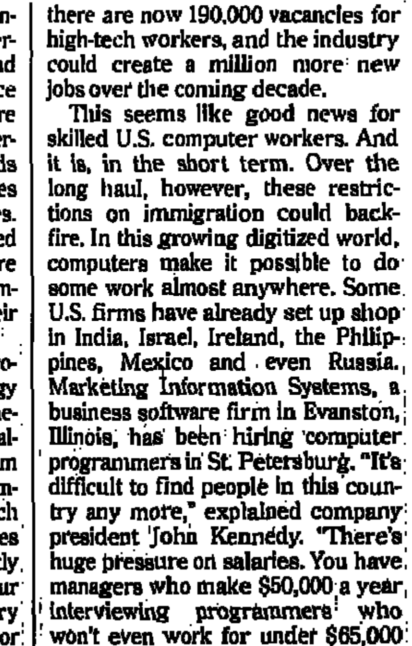


ILLUSTRATION: TOM HERZBERG

This seems like good news for skilled U.S. computer workers. And it is, in the short term. Over the long haul, however, these restrictions on immigration could backfire. In this growing digitized world, computers make it possible to do some work almost anywhere. Some U.S. firms have already set up shop in India, Israel, Ireland, the Philippines, Mexico and even Russia. Marketing Information Systems, a business software firm in Evanston, Illinois, has been hiring computer programmers in St. Petersburg. "It's difficult to find people in this country any more," explained company president John Kennedy. "There's huge pressure on salaries. You have managers who make $50,000 a year interviewing programmers who won't even work for under $65,000 or $80,000 a year."

Kennedy's company is not alone. American multinationals doubled their investments abroad in the early 1990s, creating many high-skill positions. In the early 1980s, for example, one of every 40 employees in Intel's Malaysian operations was an engineer. A decade later, that proportion had risen to one in six.

In the short term, Wall Street couldn't care less about such things. It celebrates the export of high-end research or manufacturing jobs — as well as wage and price squeezes. Usually, such efforts earn at least a coveted "buy" recommendation from market gurus.

The real question is whether Wall Street values real U.S. economic might, or is exploiting the short-term attractiveness of American equities in light of favorable interest rates and fiscal instability in Euro-obsessed Europe and browbeaten Asia. It is far from clear that America's recent upturn heralds the end of cyclical economics or the dawn of limitless prosperity. Perhaps the current economic boom is like a good run at the craps table, with the winners — skittish global capital — ready to turn tail with the first bad roll.

Another problem with the Yuppie Consensus lies in the limits of this "limitless" prosperity. The remnants of the non-Clintonized left are correct in suggesting that a significant proportion of the U.S. population faces permanent impoverishment or, at best, stagnant wages. The percentage of people living in poverty grew from 12.8 percent to 13.7 percent between 1989 and 1996, government figures show.

By most measurements, the Clinton recovery has been far less egalitarian than the much-criticized Reagan "era of greed." Between 1990 and 1995, the median family income actually declined slightly while the number of people with a net worth over $1 million more than doubled. Since 1979, the wages of the bottom 20 percent of workers dropped nearly 12 percent, and by 1.6 percent since 1990 alone. Even the pro-Clinton Progressive Policy Institute recently admitted that, adjusted for inflation, compensation for the bottom half of the wage scale is 75 cents less per hour than 20 years ago. In Silicon Valley, according to a study by the labor-backed Economic Policy Institute, real wages for the bottom 20 percent of the workforce have declined during the decade as the ratio of top corporate to production worker salaries skyrocketed from 41 to 1 (1991) to 220 to 1 (1996).

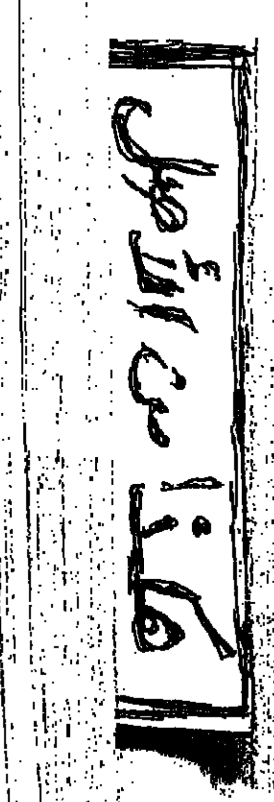
This tendency to ignore America's urban problems while celebrating the nation's global dominance is particularly acute in New York City — the epicenter of U.S. triumphalism — where unemployment rates are nearly twice the national average and job growth lags behind almost every major city in the nation. The region has the worst income inequality in the nation.

This growing gap between the affluent and the working poor threatens America's future prosperity. The percentage of Americans who feel the interests of employers and employees are in conflict has increased from 25 percent during the Great Depression — the supposed heyday of class consciousness — to 45 percent today, according to polling data.

The indifference of the Yuppie Consensus to such potentially devastating realities triggers comparisons with the "let-them-eat-cake" self-absorption of the 1920s. None of this presupposes that America's future is necessarily bleak — only that declaring victory on the strength of a bull market, even an unprecedented one, is premature at best.

If we can use current prosperity to address our competitive and class problems, rather than luxuriate in the glow of a Dow Jones average that may soon approach the 10,000 mark, it is certainly possible to imagine a second American century in which national challenges are honestly addressed and even successfully resolved. But it is profoundly self-delusional to claim the future by ignoring the present.

Joel Kotkin is a senior fellow with the Pepperdine Institute for Public Policy. David Friedman is a fellow at the MIT Japan Program.



A New South Africa

Glenn Frankel

NELSON MANDELA
A Biography
By Martin Meredith
St. Martin's. 596 pp. $29.95

BRAM FISCHER
Afrikaner Revolutionary
By Stephen Clingman
Massachusetts. 500 pp. $29.95

IN EICHMAN In Jerusalem, Hannah Arendt writes that one of the goals of the modern police state is to establish "holes of oblivion into which all deeds, good and evil, would disappear." It is our duty, argues Arendt, to preserve history and civilization by descending into those holes, rescuing those individual deeds and recounting them to ourselves and our children.

Few police states sought to make greater use of such memory holes than South Africa. The apartheid regime banned, "listed" and declared opposition movements and people effectively nonexistent. The regime had two purposes in mind — to cover up its own crimes and to deny legitimacy to its opponents. In the process it tried to obliterate several decades of history with Stalin-like dedication, much as its bulldozers erased longstanding black communities from territory it designated as white. History managed to survive — but many important pieces, moments and people were lost or stolen.

With the fall of apartheid and the rise of black-majority rule, some of that lost history has now become retrievable. South Africa's President Nelson Mandela helped begin the process himself with his richly readable autobiography. But many gaps remain, along with important questions of interpretation.

These two new works will help further the process. Martin Meredith's thoughtful book is the first full-fledged biography of Mandela since his triumphant emergence from prison in 1990 and the first by someone who was not a member or avid supporter of the liberation movement. It provides new perspective and insights into the man and his times.

Stephen Clingman's passionate study of Afrikaner dissident Bram Fischer brings to light a little-known figure who was one of the founding fathers of the liberation struggle and a close comrade and friend of Mandela's. Together, the two books serve the important function of introducing readers to more of the lost history of South Africa.

Writing in the shadow of Mandela's autobiography, Meredith — a former Africa correspondent for the London Observer and Sunday Times who has written several books about the subcontinent's modern history — faces the difficult task of telling us something we didn't already learn from that account. He is not as successful in the broad outlines of Mandela's journey from rural tribal origins to emergence as a lawyer, political activist and leader of the liberation struggle as he is in the details. He is particularly good in recounting the parallel rise and inevitable clash of white Afrikaner and black African nationalism in this century, the transformation of Mandela's African National Congress from a sleepy coalition of tribal leaders and middle-class gentlemen to a mass protest movement, and the central role of the small but influential Communist Party. He also offers the most authoritative account I've seen of the decision by the movement to turn to violence in 1961 after virtually all avenues of peaceful dissent had been shut down by the incipient police state.

Along the way, Meredith offers new clues to perhaps the most intriguing question of all: How was it that Mandela could emerge from 27 years of imprisonment without bitterness and with a genuine willingness to reconcile with his former jailers? The answer, Meredith suggests, may lie not only in Mandela's fundamental decency but in his aloofness. An austere and intensely private man with enormous self-control, Nelson Mandela has never really needed other people. Being cut off from family and friends hurt him deeply but perhaps did less damage than it would have to an ordinary person. Once released, Mandela never looked back.

Despite his image as everyone's ideal grandfather, Meredith's Mandela is a regal autocrat whose patience is far from infinite. When South African president F.W. de Klerk seeks to delay a political settlement, Mandela warns him to give in "because if you don't, we are going to humiliate you. And I will see to it that that happens." Needless to say, de Klerk immediately caves.

The only person, it seems, who really got to Mandela was his former wife, Winnie. Here too Meredith offers a solid, unadorned account of their troubled marriage and Mandela's futile efforts, upon his release from prison, to restore his relationship with a woman he desperately loved yet grew increasingly to mistrust.

One of the few people whom Mandela called friend was Bram Fischer, a Johannesburg lawyer who became the clandestine leader of the outlawed Communist Party and worked side by side with Mandela and the ANC throughout the increasingly harrowing 1950s and '60s. Fischer was chief defense

An austere and private man with enormous self-control, Mandela has never really needed other people

lawyer for Mandela and his fellow defendants at the 1963 Rivonia Trial at which Mandela and seven others were sentenced to life imprisonment. Soon after, Fischer himself was arrested; he jumped bail to live underground for nearly a year before being captured and sentenced to life himself in 1965. When he died of cancer 10 years later, the authorities kept his ashes, hoping to bury the memory along with the man.

Fischer was a South African anomaly: a dedicated, hardline communist who worshiped the Soviet Union, yet at the same time a gentle and caring man who won the respect and affection of almost everyone who knew him — including many whites who considered him a traitor. Clingman, who chairs the English department at the University of Massachusetts and is himself South African, spent more than a decade researching Fischer's life, and the result is a mass of important material that students of the apartheid era will find of great value.



From the Nile to the Cape of Good Hope

Richard W. Hull

AFRICA: A Biography
of the Continent
By John Reader
Knopf. 801 pp. $35

"THERE IS always something new coming out of Africa," observed Pliny the Elder, the 1st-century Roman encyclopedist whose vivid though mainly secondhand accounts of an exotic and mysterious continent captured the imagination of Western minds and set the pattern of discourse for nearly 1,500 years. Since then, Western visitors of nearly every stripe have probed deeply and comprehensively into the continent.

The quantity of literature by serious scholars is enormous. Nevertheless, the images, stereotypes, cliches and observational paradigms constructed by the Greeks and Romans of classical antiquity seem to endure in the popular mind. Even President Clinton's recent remarks about the slave trade and the condition of contemporary Africa betray an astonishing ignorance and naivete. And who among America's cognoscenti can carry on an informed conversation about Africa's past or present? For most, the continent still conjures up frightening images of miserable refugees stalked by drought, famine and deadly diseases. Yes, something new is always coming out of Africa, but from time immemorial it has usually been based on stories of human brutality, political chaos or social anarchy.

John Reader, an English-born photojournalist with nearly two decades of residence in Africa, must be praised for writing a refreshingly candid, deeply penetrating, intensely thought-provoking and thoroughly informed account of the continent. It's a splendid introductory text, ideally suited for old Africa hands as well as novices. With intelligence and remarkable insight, he takes the reader on an absorbing odyssey from the continent's ancient geological formation to the establishment of black majority rule in South Africa.

We are presented with a dynamic continent of ever-changing forests, deserts, climates and populations. We are introduced to the infinite varieties of adaptive responses to the environmental stresses of tropical Africa. This ambitious project touches upon a breathtaking range of topics, including climate, species evolution, the agricultural revolution, the various trades in slaves, gold, ivory and other valuables. Disease factors are carefully weighed, the Atlantic slave trade and its impact is brilliantly analyzed. We are introduced to peasants, monarchs, merchants and warlords. We encounter land-hungry white settlers and treacherous imperialists. Dimensions of resistance, rebellion, collaboration and apathetic resignation are explored with brutal candor. The story ends with the achievement of independence, the emergence of ruling elites, and the very mixed record of nation-building. Africans are left navigating between the Scylla of violent ethnocentrism and the Charybdis of unmanageable and economically debilitating sovereign debt.

Reader tells this fascinating story in a cogent and lucid style that keeps you fully engaged. Though relying largely on an impressive quantity of secondary sources, he uses them effectively and judiciously to present a variety of leading interpretations. He brings the most current cutting-edge research of leading geneticists, microbiologists, historians, anthropologists, archaeologists and paleontologists to life in highly readable form.

Reader writes out of a conviction that throughout recorded history Africa has been "woefully misunderstood and misused by the rest of the world." The book centers on the argument that "in considering the relationship between Africa and Europe, received wisdom suggests that Africa was a dark and passive continent, supine with tropical lethargy, awaiting the enlightenment that European discovery and exploration ultimately would bring. The truth is otherwise. Far from being passive, Africa responded vigorously to European attempts to establish a presence on the continent."

But he also emphasizes that Africa was not a merry place in the pre-colonial era. "Slavery was commonplace . . . and the idea that generations of Africans enjoyed congenial lives in well-integrated, smoothly functioning societies prior to the era of European exploitation is widespread but wrong." Nevertheless, Europeans were fundamentally exploitative and destructive and brought only added misery and impoverishment. Still, Africans survived as a "consequence of expedience and of their ability to accommodate the ecological realities confronting them, including predators, parasites, and disease."

Reader's book does have blemishes. He often generalizes without explaining the nuances. He makes bold assertions, such as that "the relationship between the Egyptians and the inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa never rose above that of pillager and pillaged," and that "slavery was an enduring feature of African society." Lamentably, his narrative often contradicts his own pronouncements. For him, civilization progressed more slowly in Africa than elsewhere because of the elders' inherent conservatism. On the other hand, he cites centralized, coercive state formation and monarchic despotism as reactions to external forces.

The book also suffers from a lack of balance. It purports to be a biography of the entire continent, yet woefully neglects Mediterranean Africa and overemphasizes South Africa. Reader mentions Madagascar only three times! He also gives insufficient attention to the 19th and 20th centuries. Of the 55 narrative chapters, he devotes only one to the postcolonial period (from the 1960s to the present), whereas six focus on the colonial era. He gives scant attention to the arts, religion, literature and philosophy.

Many of the photographs are his own, but he overemphasizes animals and pastoral scenes. The reader does not get a sufficient glimpse of urban scenes, infrastructure, or images of economic or material progress. Nevertheless, it is packed with fascinating and useful information laced with sound interpretations. It should prove to be one of the most important general surveys of Africa that has been produced in the last decade, a must for both academics and laypersons.

Russia puts its all into fight to save firm rouble

James Meek in Moscow

RUSSIA'S leaders closed ranks last week and vowed that the strong rouble — dividend of seven bitter years of state scrimping, saving and borrowing at the people's expense — would be defended against the threat of a catastrophic devaluation.

The rouble, which has escaped the sharp drops in value seen in Asian currencies, came under attack last week but firmed after the central bank's drastic decision to treble interest rates to a thumping 150 per cent.

Home mortgages and overdrafts are unknown to Russians, so they won't feel the pinch, but such a rate will cripple the economy if sustained.

Last Sunday the United States said it would help mobilise more aid for Russia, if needed, from international lending agencies to calm markets and make it easier for Moscow to cope with the effects of Asia's economic crisis.

The announcement, which followed high-level talks between senior US and Russian officials, was meant to demonstrate Washington's support for Moscow and to comfort investors, worried that Russian official reserves were being depleted.

But Washington's pledge of support lacked specifics. US officials did not say how much aid might be provided, offered no timetable for assistance and would not say what conditions would have to be met by Moscow. "The United States endorses additional conditional financial support from the international financial institutions, as necessary, to promote stability, structural reforms and growth in Russia," President Clinton said in a statement released by the White House.

Washington had already promised to back an International Monetary Fund staff recommendation that Russia be offered a $670 million instalment on a $9.2 billion loan. However, the IMF tranche falls a long way short of the crisis package of up to $10 billion which economists and banks are hoping for.

The Russian stock market, which had lost more than a third of its value since May 12, levelled out after heavy selling last week, but the government still faced huge interest payments on the money it borrows to pay its bills.

The coming weeks will be critical to President Yeltsin and his new prime minister, Sergei Kiriyenko, as they try to show that they mean business in reducing the government's dependence on the money markets by increasing tax collection and cutting spending.

For ordinary Russians there is little joy in store. If the rouble falls, prices will soar, inflation will follow, and scores of banks will collapse. The sacrifices of the past seven years will be rendered worthless.

If Mr Kiriyenko means what he says, and holds the rouble steady, it is likely to mean mass unemployment replacing unpaid wages as bankruptcy bites, together with spending cuts on a budget which in areas such as defence, health and education is already biting into the bone.

Posse heads for tax fight at www.ok.corral

The cyber-sheriffs want to tame the lawless frontiers of an electronic gold rush, writes **Anthony Browne**

FOR businesses it's seen as the new promised land. The United States government has described it as the fastest revolution in the history of shopping. Goods and services sold through the Internet could, according to the World Trade Organisation, be worth $300 billion by the beginning of the next century.

A recent US government report claimed business on the Internet was responsible for a quarter of all economic growth over the past five years, and had created around half the new jobs.

As in the gold rush last century, fortunes are being made. Internet bookseller Amazon, set up just a few years ago, is now worth more than $2 billion, although it has yet to make a profit. The share trading company Charles Schwab has 1.4 million on-line accounts, with $103 billion in savings.

In Britain, retailers are further behind, but most of the large ones, from Tesco to Great Universal Stores by way of Blackwells bookshops, are experimenting. Last week Gap, the clothes retailer, said it was extending its Internet shopping to UK customers.

And far bigger than Internet retailing is business-to-business trade. Unilever, for example, now purchases all its computers electronically, saving itself tens of millions of dollars.

The growth is exponential, and unprecedented. According to Washington, traffic is growing tenfold every year.

But as in the gold rush, the new virtual frontier is pretty lawless. No rules have been agreed between countries, no standard practices adopted. Each country has been adopting its own measures, which has led to a number of anomalies.

Buy a CD from the US through the Internet and you probably won't have to pay value-added tax (VAT) on it in Britain, but buy it from your local music shop and you do. Britain's Internet service providers, such as BT's LineOne, are vexed that they have to charge VAT to their UK customers while US-based rivals such as CompuServe do not.

Even within countries there are anomalies. In Britain you pay VAT on a magazine if you subscribe to its electronic version on the Internet, but not if you buy the paper version from a newsagent.



The rich countries' think-tank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), points out that on sales between countries some goods might be taxed twice and others not at all.

Governments fear they could lose huge amounts of revenue, not only in sales taxes but corporation taxes, too. One Australian official described the Internet as a "black hole into which tax will fall". Virtual companies may escape paying tax by doing — or claiming to do — their cyber-business in a tax haven.

A World Trade Organisation report said the difficulties in locating where an electronic transaction had actually taken place "pose a potential nightmare for lawyers, regulators and tax collectors".

It's not just tax that is affected by the anarchy in the virtual market place. Security, consumer protection and privacy are all becoming important issues. Only recently have the law-makers started trying to bring peace and order to the global virtual market-place. Governments realise that the complex issues will take time to resolve; and while they scratch their heads and think, they have been busy declaring one moratorium after another.

The US federal government has stopped individual states imposing a hotchpotch of different taxes on Internet business. Last month the 132 member countries of the WTO agreed not to impose any new tariffs on the sale of services on the World Wide Web.

At the same time, countries have been declaring general statements of principle. Last month the G8 group of leading industrial nations agreed to ensure the development of the global seamless electronic marketplace, with a level playing field between traditional and electronic retailing. Japan and the US reached a separate agreement a few days later.

Business groups have been lobbying hard. Recently five trade associations in the UK formed the Alliance for Electronic Business. Its chairman, Peter Agar, said: "If we're going to exploit the opportunities, we need to respond to a very different market place — we need to make sure it works as well as the physical market place, and that policymakers don't over-regulate."

DESPITE the agreements in principle, finding solutions may not be so easy. Patrick King, global head of electronic business at Price Waterhouse, said: "Governments are used to static, real territories with real physical goods, and that is what property law has been based on since Roman times. In electronic business, there is no geographical location, and often there are no real goods. It's testing to the limit governments' ability to legislate."

With a global market place, countries know they have to agree the rules or there will be distortions that will be ruthlessly exploited, or ridiculous complexity. One US politician, an advocate of making cyberspace tax-free, said: "If you go on-line in England to order flowers in the Netherlands to send to an aunt in Germany and you pay with a credit card from a US bank, how many jurisdictions get a tax bite? It's an administrative nightmare."

When it comes to actual policies, different countries have different agendas. John Dryden of the OECD said: "It's easy to agree that there should be a level playing field, but it's not so easy when you get down to the detail."

Tensions between countries are already apparent. The European Union is on the verge of a trade war with the US over its lack of data protection laws. The EU believes there should be legal protection of confidentiality, whereas the US believes in self-regulation. The EU is threatening to ban the transmission of all data to the US from October if it doesn't introduce the protection.

Mr Dryden said: "Processing an airline reservation in a foreign country, for example, seems quite innocent, but what if passenger John Smith wants a kosher meal? Jews, vegetarians and those with medical conditions could all be identified. There is a lot of sensitive information going to and fro, and it could end up in the hands of third parties."

Encryption and consumer protection laws could also spark rows, but tax could still prove the stickiest issue. The real concern is the taxation and duties on electronic transmissions, said a WTO official.

Many goods and services can be delivered electronically — whether a musical recording, a medical diagnosis, or a data processing service. At the moment, no industrial country imposes tariffs on these — and the US wants to keep it that way.

However, Mr Dryden warned: "If it gets to be a big business, some countries may see it as a source of revenue and put duty on it. It could become a real political football."

One big difficulty with tax on electronic business is simply knowing what's been taking place. "If you can't see a transaction, how do you tax it?" asked Mr King, echoing the OECD's belief that electronic cash can be virtually untraceable.

As the governments ponder what rules to impose, experts are warning them to use a light touch. Mike Perkins, of the electronic commerce group of Deloitte & Touche and an adviser to the OECD, warned: "If you plan for the extreme, you might end up imposing a regime that is too unwieldy and hampers growth." — *The Observer*

In Brief

FIVE of Japan's largest banks had their credit and stability ratings downgraded by Moody's, the credit agency, whose report described the country's banking system as being in a state of slow-motion collapse. Meanwhile Hong Kong authorities revealed that output fell by 2 per cent in real terms in the first three months of this year.

THE Thai government has asked the IMF to relax its tough prescription for monetary reforms after admitting that the aftermath of the Asian crisis will squeeze its economy more than initial estimates suggested.

TWO of the top science-based companies in the US are to merge. American Home Products is to take over Monsanto, the chemical and biotechnology company, in a $34 billion deal. Together they are valued at $96 billion.

TELECOMS group Cable & Wireless signalled its intention of becoming one of the world's most powerful Internet players when it announced plans to buy part of MCI for $625 million. The deal could clear the way for regulators to approve MCI's $37 billion merger with WorldCom.

THE Dutch bank ABN Amro posted a $12 billion bid for Belgium's Generale Bank. If it succeeds, the merger would create Europe's third biggest bank.

INVESTMENT bank ING Barings was in upheaval after chief executive Arjun Mathrani resigned in a power struggle with the Dutch parent company.

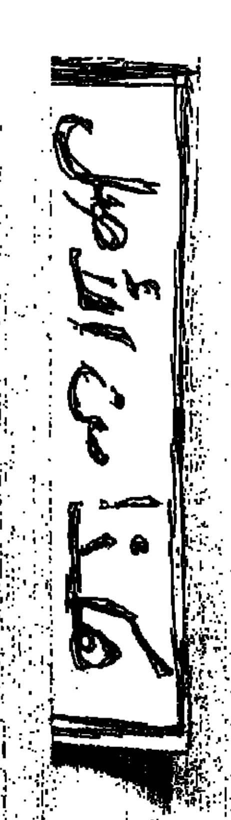
ICL, Britain's largest computer company, said a deal it has signed with Microsoft to use its Windows NT software would create 1,000 new jobs.

AIR passengers will have to pay an extra $15 on fares when duty-free sales are scrapped next year, the head of Britain's privatised airports operator warned.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates June 1	Sterling rates May 18
Australia	2.6591-2.6628	2.6098-2.6157
Austria	20.49-20.51	20.40-20.42
Belgium	60.09-60.13	59.83-59.94
Canada	2.3824-2.3845	2.3544-2.3568
Denmark	11.09-11.10	11.04-11.06
France	9.76-9.77	9.724-9.738
Germany	2.9133-2.9159	2.8994-2.9022
Hong Kong	12.68-12.69	12.56-12.57
Ireland	1.1544-1.1567	1.1509-1.1535
Italy	2,871-2,873	2,858-2,862
Japan	228.46-228.72	220.52-220.82
Netherlands	3.2837-3.2867	3.2672-3.2702
New Zealand	3.0998-3.1056	3.0425-3.0485
Norway	12.30-12.32	12.19-12.20
Portugal	298.37-298.69	297.17-297.51
Spain	247.41-247.85	246.31-246.51
Sweden	12.79-12.81	12.63-12.65
Switzerland	2.4177-2.4207	2.4126-2.4127
USA	1.6357-1.6376	1.6208-1.6218
ECU	1.4778-1.4795	1.4714-1.4733

FTSE100 Share index up 11.7 at 5837.4. FTSE 250 index up 106.4 at 5809.9. Gold down $10.60 at $289.80.



FACULTY OF SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT: CHEMISTRY

Professor/ Associate Professor

Requirements: Ph.Q in Chemistry; specialisation in Analytical Chemistry with experience related to minerals or food technology or marine resources or water treatment; lecturing experience; a proven research record and preferably a background within the industry.

Job description: Teaching at undergraduate level and involvement in student practicals, supervision of postgraduates, course development and research.

Date of assumption of duties: As soon as possible.

Closing date: 3 July 1998.

Contact persons: Mr Andrew Kanime at +264-61-206-3151 or Ms Monica Heita at +264-61-206-3102.

Fringe benefits: The University of Namibia offers competitive salaries and the following fringe benefits: • pension fund/gratuity scheme • medical aid scheme • annual bonus • housing scheme • generous leave privileges • relocation expenses.

Non-Namibian citizens may be appointed for a 3-year, renewable contract period.

Application procedure: Applications in writing, accompanied by a curriculum vitae stating full details of present salary notch, increment date, the earliest available date when duty can be assumed and including three referees should be submitted to: The Head, Recruitment and Administration, University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia. Preliminary telegraphic applications may be made via fax +264-61-206-3843/206-3003 or E-mail:akanime@unam.na



UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA



University of Otago

Te Whare Wananga o Otago
Dunedin, New Zealand

PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL STUDIES

The Council of the University invites application for the established chair of Political Studies recently vacated by Professor J R Flynn. The Professor of Political Studies must be an internationally recognised scholar with evidence of outstanding research contributions in one of the major disciplines of politics and have a fine teaching record. Preference may be given to someone with specialisation in international relations. However, persons well qualified in other fields are encouraged to apply. Any appointee is expected to maintain the department's support for the Otago Foreign Policy School, an institution which annually hosts the premier event in New Zealand's international affairs calendar. Applicants will be judged on quality of achievement. Those who, because of life history, had delayed or interrupted careers will not be at a disadvantage.

The successful candidate will be expected to provide academic leadership in teaching, research, and curricular development, to foster staff development, and to demonstrate a capacity to guide the on-going development of the department. The new appointee will also be required to take an active part in teaching, including the supervision of research students.

The appointment will be made at an appropriate step on the professorial salary scale, NZ$86,500 - NZ$106,500 per annum.

The successful applicant would be expected to take up the position from 1 January 1999, although a later date may be arranged.

Enquiries may be addressed to Dr Chris Rudd, (phone: [64 3] 479-8664; Email: chris.rudd@stonebow.otago.ac.nz).

Reference Number: AG98/20 — Closing Date: 31 July 1998

METHOD OF APPLICATION

Further details regarding this position, the University and the application procedure are available from the Deputy Director, Personnel Services, University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand (phone: [64 3] 479 8269; facsimile: [64 3] 474 1607; or e-mail. grant.okane@stonebow.otago.ac.nz). Further information about the University of Otago can be found at our homepage at www.otago.ac.nz. Applicants should send two copies of their curriculum vitae together with the names, addresses and fax numbers of three referees, to the Deputy Director of Personnel Services by the specified closing date, quoting the appropriate reference number. If an applicant is shortlisted for interview, whanau support will be welcome.

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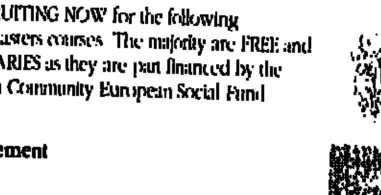


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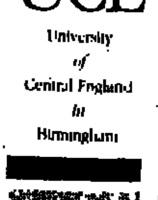
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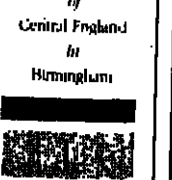
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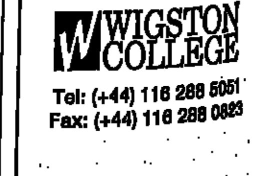


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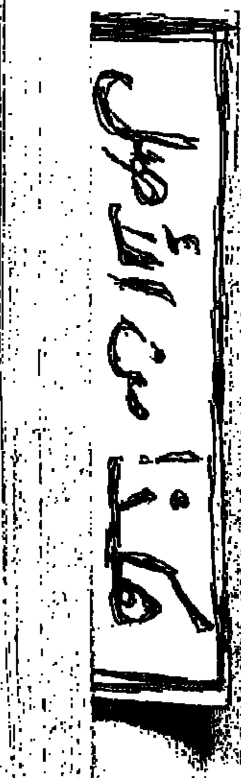


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Long finger of death

Sarah Boseley on the most dangerous threat to young women's lives

TUBERCULOSIS **is the single biggest infectious killer of young women in the world. More than 1 million between the ages of 14 and 55 will die of it, and 2.5 million will become ill from the disease this year alone, according to new figures by the World Health Organisation.**

"Wives, mothers and wage earners are being cut down in their prime and the world isn't noticing," said Paul Dolin of the WHO's Global Tuberculosis Programme. "Yet the ripple effect on families, communities and economies will be felt long after a woman has died."

Women who become infected with the tuberculosis bacteria are more likely to develop the disease than men, but Paul Nunn, chief of the WHO's TB research unit in Geneva, says it is not clear why. "It may be to do with pregnancy or hormonal changes. There are many theories, but none of them are very convincing."

More research is needed, he says, but it is even more important to ensure that specific needs of women are met in the control programme on the ground.

"In parts of India, women who are married are terrified of getting it. There is a risk of being rejected by the husband's family, usually by the mother-in-law," he says. Unmarried women fear they will not be able to get a husband if anyone knows they have the disease.

"India's TB control programme is a complete shambles. Some are making herculean efforts, but they are defeated by the incompetence of civil servants and poor infrastructure," says Dr Nunn.

Pakistan, which seems to have "a disregard for the health of the population", is even worse, but Bangladesh is doing well, he says.

An international meeting last month organised by the Nordic School of Public Health in Gothenburg, Sweden, was the first to address the gender issue in the control of TB, which now accounts for 9 per cent of the worldwide deaths of women aged between 15 and 44. It is a bigger killer than war (4 per cent), HIV (3 per cent) and heart disease (3 per cent).

The WHO programme for TB control is now operating in 97 countries. Called Dots (directly observed treatment, short course), it involves health and community workers diagnosing cases and then recording patients swallowing their drugs and trying to ensure they complete the course. But it is important the patient understands that she must attend for six months.

The WHO has declared a global TB emergency. A particular worry now is eastern Europe, where cases have risen by 25 per cent in two years.

Tuberculosis spreads through coughs and sneezes. "No one is safe from TB," says a WHO spokeswoman. It respects no national borders."

Manal, Sonia and Wafa . . . stoned and firebombed by religious bigots PHOTOGRAPH: KAI WIEDENHOFER

Under siege in Jerusalem

David Sharrock reports on three women caught between two cultures

"*WANTED:* Flat for three twentysomething Palestinian women to rent. Must be in Jewish west Jerusalem and free from religious bigots and bombers."

That would be an honest advertisement if Manal Diab, Sonia and Wafa Khoury wanted to be open about their recent travails on the top floor of No 16 Iddo the Prophet Street. But perhaps their notoriety has already ruined all prospect of finding another place to live in Jerusalem.

Notoriety must be the wrong word, but how else can you account for three bombs outside their door in less than 12 months living on the fringes of what is supposed to be the trendy yuppiefied district of Musrara, with its fine views of the gilded Dome of the Rock?

Defying the conventions of both sides of this divided city, Manal, Sonia and Wafa rented the flat last summer. It seemed ideal, close to the Old City where Manal works as a Hebrew language teacher and close to the centre for its shopping and nightlife.

The only problem — and it didn't seem one when they signed the contract — was their neighbours. The narrow street runs between a mostly working-class Sephardic-Moroccan neighbourhood and the ultra-Orthodox Mea Shearim. Two tribes, little in common with one another except perhaps a hatred of Arabs. Even ones who dress in the latest stretch-Lycra fashions and who could easily pass for Israelis themselves. Which Manal, Sonia and Wafa all are — except that they are Israeli Arabs.

It's a term that Manal doesn't like — the map on the living room wall of Palestine showing all the villages which have been erased by Israel since 1948 clearly demonstrates where loyalties lie — but she and her friends are all passport-bearing Israelis, born within the 1967 Green Line separating the Jewish state from the Occupied Territories.

In any case, right now questions of identity are the least of their worries. Their ordeal began with swastikas daubed on their door and stones hurled at them by Jewish seminary students from the local yeshiva. But now somebody is trying to kill them — or at best intimidate them out of their home — and the police don't seem to be getting anywhere with their investigation.

The third bomb went off on the night of Israel's big 50th birthday party. It was 12.40am and because the city had been ablaze with fireworks all evening Manal wasn't sure what the loud explosion meant. "I went from my bedroom into the living room, and it was on fire. I couldn't call the police because the phone was in that room, so I began screaming for help from my bedroom window. And no one moved. They just watched me. I kept shouting at them to call the police and eventually they did, but it was unbelievable how long they took."

The entrance to the flat is now charred and evil-smelling for the third time. Two previous small bombs exploded outside the door in October and December. The second prompted some attention because a police explosives expert was injured trying to defuse it, Jerusalem's rightwing mayor, Ehud Olmert, even came to visit and get his photograph taken.

"Olmert asked me 'Why don't you go and live in the Arab part of the city?' So I told him 'Fine, but fix everything there first, the buses, the potholed roads, the electricity supply'. We are all very busy, career women who work late, and it's difficult getting back to the Arab districts where there are no real services," says Manal.

There is another problem too. Career women who want to look cool and sexy, share a flat and generally run their lives the way they want to without any interference don't go down a storm in east Jerusalem. The women briefly shared a flat in the east Jerusalem neighbourhood of Beit Hanina, where they were harassed by men for flouting Arab tradition and dressing like Western women. The city's western quarters are more to their taste, even though only a few seriously wealthy Palestinians choose to live there.

Perhaps this also accounts for the indifference of the Palestinian media to the bombings, which seems to have ignored the plight of Manal, Sonia and Wafa. An ad hoc "Committee to Save the Women" was formed by well-wishers, and a Haifa-based feminist group dispatched a visiting American PhD candidate in modern Jewish history to move in with the women as a volunteer security guard.

But, Manal wryly notes, all the initial enthusiastic offers of help evaporated like so much Jerusalem snow. "Somebody promised to pay our municipal tax, which we can't afford because we lost so many days work over this, but it never happened. We are alone with our suffering; it's the Palestinian fate."

The police put up a video camera to monitor the flat entrance, but it disappeared a few weeks before the last bombing and, oddly, a spokesman thought it was still there. "The last thing I said that night before I went to sleep was 'They will bomb us for sure tonight because it's Independence Day'. I'm scared, but they won't break me. This is giving me more strength," says Manal. "The people who did this are weak who can't fight in a fair way.

"I just want to talk with them, to say to them 'You want me to leave? Then come and sit with me and convince me'. I believe that I have the right to live wherever I want in this land, which is everyone's land to share, even if it's not my country."

After the second bomb the women started looking for another flat to rent. Not because they were scared, but because their landlord asked them to. He has given them their notice, and when the 12-month contract expires at the end of this month they must move out.

"It is going to be difficult to find a new place to live in, because so many people have heard about us now and it makes me very angry because it's as if this is all our fault," said Manal. Not surprisingly, they have found nothing so far. "We went to look at another apartment in French Hill (one of east Jerusalem's oldest Jewish settlements, nowadays home to many liberal university professors and diplomats) and the landlord seemed terrified of us all the time he was showing us round.

"It makes me so mad. I want to shout at people 'Why are you scared of some 20-year-old women who are just trying to build their careers? Why?'"

During our talk a visiting New Yorker popped by to offer her condolences. "I read about it and was so apalled I had to come over and apologise for our so-called brethren," said Hanna Berman. "I'm modern Orthodox myself, and I think this is outrageous. It's like the blacks in the fifties in the States or the Nazis. If we do nothing then we too are responsible." She stalked off into the night promising to give the local rabbi an earful.

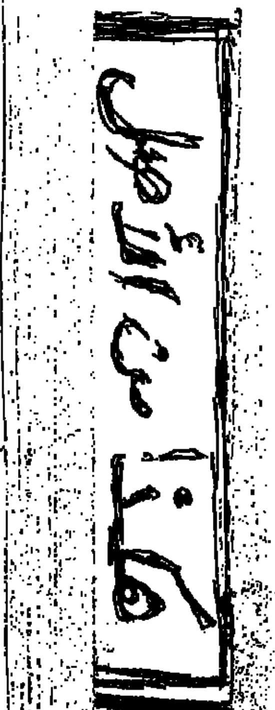
Nomi Bar-Yaacov, an Israeli human rights lawyer, says the attacks are symptomatic of the growing intolerance of Israel's religious community. "It's getting worse. If a Jewish woman wore a miniskirt in the same area she would face the same problem. I have personally been told that my Jewish blood is worthy of spilling. The combination of being Palestinian and secular merely doubles the problem for these women."

Manal grew up in the Galilee, Sonia and Wafa in Nazareth. Living in predominantly Arab regions of Israel, they never experienced discrimination until they moved to Jerusalem to study, work and get on. More than 90 per cent of Israeli Arabs live in segregated all-Arab towns and villages. In April severe rioting broke out in one village after the army demolished an illegally built home, raising the spectre of a new intifada, but this time one made in Israel among its disaffected Arab population. Opposition politicians urged the government to do more to improve relations.

For Manal, Sonia and Wafa it may be too late. They are thinking of emigrating. "I'm Palestinian and I identify with the Palestinian cause, but as a modern woman I can't live with Arabs," says Sonia. "They are chauvinist, only like blondes and have totally different mindsets to ours." But she couldn't see herself falling in love with and marrying a Jewish man either, unless he was staunchly anti-Zionist.

Until the lease runs out they have somewhere to live, even if the door and walls are blackened by fire. "We won't be here much longer, and we don't know where we'll be next, but I'm still waiting for them to come and bomb me again," says Manal.

'I went from my bedroom into the living room, and it was on fire. I began screaming for help from my bedroom window. And no one moved'



The talking wounded

Is victimisation the new religion? The new apostles of suffering would have us believe so, says **Dea Birkett**

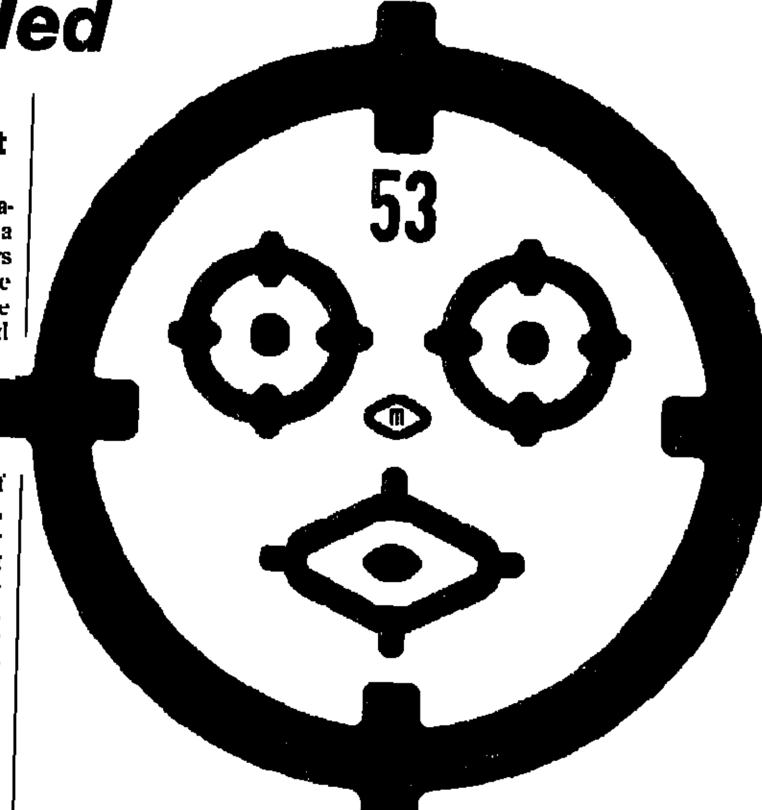


ILLUSTRATION: JOE MAGEE

ONCE there was Christianity, then Marxism, then Materialism. But now a faith is spreading across the land that has more adherents than the environmental movement and more status than the Church of England. It's Victimism — the cult of the victim. The Great and the Good in Britain — inside and outside government — all subscribe to it. Victim worship is the new religion of the late nineties.

There is nothing better than being a victim. You get to influence laws and meet cabinet ministers, and are guaranteed unlimited media access. You are listened to and lauded wherever you go. No one is more sacred than the victim, no one more immune to criticism, no one more difficult to confront and question. You are a hero, not for anything you have achieved, but simply because of what has happened to you. As a label it's far more fashionable than Prada.

Last week, 37-year-old Carl Stottor was just the latest to declare his right to influence and power. Stottor, who narrowly escaped being murdered by the serial killer Dennis Nilsen, has asked the Home Office to stop the murderer profiting from his forthcoming autobiography, History Of A Drowning Boy. "Victims should benefit from publications like this," he said bluntly.

Stottor spent three weeks in a coma after Nilsen strangled him, then dumped him in a bath; there is no doubt that his suffering was horrific. But it happened 16 years ago, and it should not give him a right to legislate and censor. And the irony of his outcry is that it is more than likely that Nilsen himself has bought into the very same victim cult.

Like Mary Bell before him, the mass murderer is expected to claim that he, too, suffered horrendously as a child. This new cult has spawned a priesthood as repressive as any to be found in the great faiths. Whereas stories of victimisation were once used to uncover a secret reality, to expose the horrors of the past, now such stories are employed for the very opposite purpose — to silence, stifle and suppress. Attempts to mutilate and remove Marcus Harvey's portrait of Myra Hindley from the Sensation exhibition at London's Royal Academy and the attacks on the publication of Gitta Sereny's biography of Bell, Cries Unheard, are all led by victims. In the debates surrounding proposed legislation for the indeterminate sentencing of sex offenders, it is the voices of the victims that are crying out loud. At a meeting to discuss the housing of Sidney Cooke, a paedophile, in Paddy Ashdown's constituency, the MP's appeal for calm was shouted down with, "You weren't abused, Mr Ashdown!"

These new apostles' message is clear: unless you're a victim, you have no right to comment on and contribute to the debate. Well, I am a victim. And in the new tradition of the victim cult, I would like to share my story with you. Between the ages of 10 and 11, my best friend's elder brother abused me. Several times a week, while no one else was around, he would take me into a cupboard — it was always the same walk-in cupboard — close the door behind us, and put his fingers inside me. It hurt.

At first, I tried to fight him, but he was much larger than I was. He said that if I told anyone, he would say it was my idea. I believed him. I couldn't avoid coming across him; the children from our two families were in and out of each other's front doors every day. His sister was my best friend; I wanted to see her. The abuse continued — as regularly as doing my homework — until we moved away.

But does my status as a victim mean that the Home Secretary should consult me on changes to the law concerning sex offences against children? No. The teenager who abused me has just as many rights, and is in every way just as human as I am. I am appalled at the thought that, if that abuse had happened now instead of 30 years ago, and I had reported it, he would be on the sex offender register, branded for ever as an abuser. He is not essentially different to me; the only difference between us is what he did, to me, at that particular time. In another situation he might well have become the victim himself — of bullying, of a car crash, of cancer. But like a religion, the victim cult only allows for a clear-cut definition of good and evil. According to their faith, we are both branded for ever: he as a victimiser and I, no less attractively, as a victim.

Once, if you walked along a street and were mugged, you weren't "a victim of a mugging", you were mugged. If your house was flooded when the river burst its banks (as ours was), you weren't "a flood victim", your house was flooded. You got over it; your life moved on. Now the label of victim is not only defining, it's indelible. Once a victim, always a victim. Like a military title, you carry that credential to the grave. If you refute the long-term effect your victimisation has had on you, then you are deemed to be hiding your head in the sand.

WHEN I told a close friend about my own abuse as a child, her instant reply was, "God, that must have ruined your sex life." Well, I'm sorry to disappoint the victim lobby, but it hasn't. Yet even as I write this, I can hear distant cries of, "She's in denial! She still hasn't come to terms with the trauma." Today's victims are not powerless. On the contrary, being a victim gives you access to areas that non-victims cannot reach. The mother of one of Mary Bell's victims had a personal half-hour audience with the Home Secretary. And to declare yourself a victim is a shortcut to fame. You can be guaranteed a chat-show seat and a full page in a tabloid newspaper.

So it's hardly surprising that defining yourself as a victim is becoming ever more popular. Whereas the captions in television debates used to read, "expert in" or "author of", now they're more likely to include the word "victim". A recent show captioned one woman simply "victim's mother", as if an expertise in itself. In a recent TV talk show on the sex offenders register, a member of the panel claimed to have been sexually abused 432 times. What was the audience's reaction to his claim? Shock? Horror? Grief? No — spontaneous applause.

The outcome of such adulation is that your abuse defines you. Without it, you are nobody and nothing. In such a climate, claims for being a victim are rife. Many are uncheckable; often we simply have to take the victim's word for it. Yet these declarations are the Gospel of our age, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which, however inconsistent and outlandish, are almost always believed. But the more complicated reality is, as with the claims of Mary Bell and now the British nurses in Saudi, that we will never really know the truth. It's time to exorcise the victim cult.

Despite what has happened to me, I am not a victim. I will not be wearing my "I've been abused too" badge with pride. I refuse to celebrate something that's nothing short of shameful — not to me, but to the perpetrator. I will not be defined by a single set of incidents in my distant past. And I do not think I should be consulted by the Home Office on the treatment of sex offenders any more than any other individual member of this society. Let's applaud both the former victims and perpetrators who overcome, rather than are overcome by, their past.

Dea Birkett's Serpent In Paradise is published in paperback by Picador (£6.99)

Know your Mark Hughes from your Marcuse?

Peter Lennon on the intellectual approach to the World Cup in France

PREDICTABLY French philosophers, sociologists and literary critics are muscling in on the forthcoming World Cup, peddling their cinq sous worth on the origins, motivation and significance of the game. One new book, Le Football et l'Art, connects football to Expressionist and Pop art; Patrick Mignon in La Passion du Football claims that football mirrors the development of the industrial society, and Monsieurs Patrice Delbourg and Benoit Heimermann have produced for the tournament, Football & Littérature, "an anthology of pens and studs".

The trouble with intellectuals invading the pitch is that they are an unpredictable bunch as likely to spread alarm and dismay as appreciation. Take Umberto Eco. In 1978 he told that the effect of seeing a football match aged 14 made him lose his faith in God. "Watching this cosmic meaningless performance for the first time," he wrote, "I doubted the existence of God." The experience, he said, led him to suspect that "the world was probably a pointless fiction and the Supreme Being may be (or may not be) simply a hole". If he had said "a goal" then fans (of both soccer and God) would not have been so upset.

And what use is a pusillanimous fan who can't tell joy from despair? As most schoolboys don't know, cheering at a football match terrified Arnold Bennett.

"More terrible than guns," he described it. "This massive cheer reverberated round the field like the echoes of a battleship's broadside in a fjord. But it was human, and therefore much more terrible than guns . . . If such are the symptoms of pleasure, what must be the symptoms of pain or disappointment?"

When you do get an intellectual actually playing the game he behaves like an irresponsible cad. Vladimir Nabokov played in goal for Cambridge. Cheated, he felt, of the glory which the Continentals afford their goalies, he spent most of his time leaning against the post composing poetry. "Small wonder I was not very popular with my team-mates," he said.

It took a French intellectual, Albert Camus, also a goalie (Racing University of Algiers) to restore gravitas to the debate. In 1957, interviewed by France Football, he made his celebrated declaration: "What I most surely know in the long run about morality and the obligations of men . . . I learned it with RUA."

In 1992, the critic and biographer, Ian Hamilton, made a determined attempt to muster status for football in Britain with his Faber Book Of Soccer.

But there was a trace of desperation in his introduction. "Soccer is notoriously a sport without much of a literature," he wrote. "Unlike cricket or rugby it has few links with higher education. The soccer-intellectual tends to treat soccer as an off-duty self-indulgence, like old movies or detective novels — it's a strictly trivial pursuit. But soccer fans do think," he pleaded pathetically.

Regrettable, since the off-duty intellectuals in Britain have made little headway, unlike in France where the government has appointed a sociologist to the sports ministry to perorate on the social implications of the game.

Cricket — that somnambulistic ritual whose fans appear to be more in need of a psychiatrist than a sociologist — is the game more congenial to British intellectuals. This has given birth to acres of poetry.

G F Grace wrote of "The lost ball" which . . .

fled in the golden sunlight,
Like the devil away from
psalms.

Then there was the rousing 19th Ballade Of Cricket by T W Lang:

Alas, yet liefer on Youth's
hither shore,
Would I be some poor Player
on scant hire,
Than King among the old
who play no more, —
THIS is the end of everyman's
desire!

Soccer does not inspire such tea-and-crumpet doggerel, perhaps because the name itself, plundered inelegantly from AsSOCiation FootballER, does not invite reverence.

The best kind of intellectual, or at least literate fan, approaches football in much the same way Hazlitt did pugilism, the favoured sport of 18th century literary gents. Hazlitt's essays on The Fancy were knowledgeable and tolerant, reverence in check but enthusiasm on the loose.

This is the approach of the Uruguayan writer, Eduardo Galeano, who in Football In Sun And Shadow, admits that the football fanatic "is a fan in a madhouse".

"But when good football happens," writes this international spirit, "I give thanks for the miracle and I don't give a damn which team or country performs it".

Football, by the way, was once in danger of being erased from the national curriculum. James IV, entering the King Canute stakes of 1491, banned the game: "It is statute and ordained," he declared, "that in na place of the Realme there be used Fute-ball or uther sik unproffitable sportes."

Jimmy the King could not have been further offside. In the following century football was reported to be in rude health: "Causing fighting, brawling, contention, quarrel-picking, homicide and a great effusion of blood."

Fifty years old and adored by millions . . . the Citroën Deux Chevaux PHOTOGRAPH: LINA AHNOF

Celebration of a reliably eccentric tin can

IT WAS loved and loathed in equal measure from the day it was launched in 1948. Today, 50 years on, the French 2CV still inspires the same mix of emotions, *writes David Harrison*.

Last week thousands of owners and other enthusiasts turned up at the Saint Quentin en Yvelines leisure centre near Paris to mark the idiosyncratic "tin-can" car's 50th birthday.

Many said the Deux Chevaux, famous for its peel-back roof and bolt-on panels, would not last five years when it was sprung on a bemused French public after the second world war.

Designer Pierre Boulanger and his team at Citroën wanted to create a vehicle to make life easier for France's huge farming community. Legend has it that Boulanger decreed that the 2CV should be able to carry a farmer, a few chickens and a basket of newly-hatched eggs comfortably across a ploughed field.

The result was a uniquely over-engineered but light and economical car, with a tendency to roll on corners. The baby was adopted by millions of families, many of whom still swear by its reliability and revel in its eccentricity. When it was unveiled at the 1948 Paris car show, a journalist suggested that Citroën should provide a can-opener.

The Deux Chevaux was the poor man's convertible. But for a vehicle never seen as a "collector's car" it has spawned a host of owners' clubs. A former Citroën press officer, Jacques Wolgensinger, wrote a book, The 2CV: We Were So In Love, which mentions famous drivers of the Deuche. They include: The Thompson Twins in the Tintin cartoons, James Bond in the film For Your Eyes Only, and Brigitte Bardot. The car has been converted into a boat, a bus and a theatre, and used more than once on a high-wire.

Wolgensinger describes "this little motor" as "an expression of the soul. Along the thousand paths of the human memory, she is rolling still, unstoppably, into the eternity of remembrance and the glory of lost youth."

Production of the 2CV stopped in 1990 when it became a victim of European safety regulations.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

HOW do manufacturers of condoms "electronically" test them?

THE test comprises a conveyor containing a "former" — a metallic condom-shaped coil through which passes an electronic charge. The condom is placed on the former and then stroked with an electronically conductive brush.

If the condom has holes or thin patches, the current will pass through the latex and form an electronic circuit which triggers an alarm that automatically rejects the condom. Critics claim that, as the test takes place before the condom is sealed in its wrapper, any damage caused by the subsequent packaging process can be undetected. — *David Northmore, London*

WHEN was food first preserved in tin cans?

IN 1795, the French, faced on all sides by the threat of military and naval action, offered a prize of 12,000 francs for a method by which food could be preserved in easily transported containers. It took the chef, confectioner and distiller, Nicolas Apert until 1809 to develop a method for preserving food using bottles or jars sealed with wax and heated. His method was a success, but neither he nor anyone else knew why, until Pasteur explained the science many years later.

The tin can itself was invented in England in 1810 by Peter Durand, who used sheet steel coated with tin and soldered by hand. By 1813, Durand was under contract to the Royal Navy, and the patented cans were widely in use in the Navy by 1820. They were introduced into the United States in about 1819 but did not really catch on until the Civil War made them essential. — *D N Mackay, London*

SIR John Franklin was supplied with large quantities of tinned food for the ill-fated expedition of the Erebus and Terror (1845 to 1848). Recent analysis of tissue from the bodies of three seamen buried on Beechey Island in Canada's Arctic archipelago revealed extremely high levels of lead, and researchers believe that lead poisoning from the soldered linings of the tin cans was a contributing cause of the Franklin disaster, leading to physical deterioration and mental derangement among the crew — *James T Neilson, Alberta, Canada*

WHAT is the origin of the expression "jay walker"?

THE expression has nothing to do with the bird of that name. It is derived from the 13th century French word *jai*, meaning a foolish or gullible person. This, in turn, comes from the Latin *gaius*. At the turn of the century in America, "jay" was a popular slang term for a rustic or countrified person. When one of these yokels visited the big city, his confused and dangerous attempts to cross the street were therefore known as "jay walking". — *Edward Phillips, London*

Any answers?

A RADIO pundit recently forecast that the advent of global companies and global communication would, in time, lead to only 20 per cent of the world population being employed and the rest living in poverty. Is his prediction realistic? — *Dennis Sinclair, Pudsey, W Yorks*

ALMOST all dogs eat "anything". Why then are they usually so very fussy about eating fruit? — *Leonard England, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk; faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

Letter from Melbourne Chris Sitka

A sorry business

IT WAS national Sorry Day in Australia last week and Melbourne's main street was closed off to allow us to walk from St Paul's Cathedral to the Town Hall where Uncle Ernie played the anthem of the Stolen Generations: "They took my brown skinned baby away" on a gum leaf. We could just catch its amplified strains above the racket of construction work and the rattle of trams.

The crowd packed the cavernous hall. Impoverished Aboriginal members of the Stolen Generation mixed with former state governors, the Chief Justice, politicians, clergy, business sponsors, footballers, the media and the general sorry public.

This was Australia's first Sorry Day: a spontaneous grassroots welling of emotion and empathy for the suffering of generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who were forcibly removed from their families and communities between 1910 and 1970.

A national inquiry last year found that the government policy of forced removal was a gross violation of human rights and technically an act of genocide because it had the intention of destroying Australia's indigenous culture by forced assimilation. However, it was not so much the legal findings but the harrowing personal stories of people who gave their testimonies that touched the hearts of so many Australians.

The crowd at the Town Hall included members of the churches, who set up both the missions on which indigenous Australians were virtually incarcerated and the homes their children were taken away to. The word "sorry" in Aboriginal English, which is a distinct dialect, has a resonance of profound empathy and mourning for those who have suffered a loss. A death in the family is known as sorry business.

The hall reverberated with sorry business as we felt the anguish of people such as Margaret Harrison, once confined to Ebenezer Mission in Victoria, who pleaded with the Board of Protection: "Please would you kindly allow me to have my two girls with me here as [another] one of them died and I have not seen her before she died and I should like the other two to be with me to comfort me.

"Please do not disappoint me for my heart is breaking to have them with me. Please to send them up here as I cannot leave this station."

As Archie Roach got up to sing the words of the song Uncle Ernie had played on his gum leaf, he also indicated his anguish at being taken from his parents, and how he had gone on, not to the better life promised at the time by the white authorities, but to face discrimination and destitution. "I've often lived on the streets and gone without a feed for days and no one ever said sorry to me."

A woman in the audience called out "I'm sorry, Archie." I cried all the way through his song.

Later the Lord Mayor, Ivan Deveson, came on stage and added his apologies to Archie and all the others. He invited Aunty Iris, an elder of the Wurundjei people, the traditional custodians of Melbourne, on to the stage. They were forced to swap Melbourne for a few beads and blankets and given nearby Coranderrk Station to live on. When the station made a profit, that too was taken from them.

THE LORD Mayor handed Aunty Iris the key to the city and a Sorry Book signed by the Melbourne town councillors. So far 250,000 Australians have signed Sorry Books, which were presented to indigenous elders all over the country. I bet Aunty Iris never thought, when she was living on the mission listening to the wailing of mothers mourning their stolen children, that she would ever be guest of honour at the Melbourne Town Hall.

Even the Thacherite premier of Victoria, Jeff Kennet, has said, "We're sorry for what happened and we're sorry for the hurt and pain."

But much to the anger of Sorry Day participants, the Prime Minister John Howard, though he has said he is personally sorry, has so far refused to make a formal government apology. All the same, I could feel a healing taking place as Aunty Iris got a standing ovation.

After another rendition by Uncle Ernie on his gum leaf, I wandered red-eyed out into the autumn sun on Swanston Street and, just for a minute, beyond the cacophony of the construction site and the barking of the spruikers outside discount shops, I could feel something of the spirit of Wurundjei land before the concrete and trams took over.

A Country Diary

Jacqueline Karp Gendre

CHARENTE MARITIME, southwest France: Cycling back from the beach I thought I had sighted a bearded variant of goldfinch, but no. Just a greedy one, gathering so many groundsel seeds that a mass of fluffy white whiskers stuck out on either side of its sharp beak.

The warm weather is finally here: pairs of hoopoes loop the loop over the village fountain, their crests and wings flashing black white blush in dramatic figures of eight. The local word is *pup*, as onomatopoeic as the English word for the hollow hoot they wake us up with. They are great lawn excavators, too, and plunge their curved bills up and down like sewing machines in our already parched grass.

The turtledoves must have a hotline to the environment minister, Dominique Voinet, who is waging war on their behalf, and for the first time in years seem to know it is safe to settle. We have a shy pair nesting in our maritime pine, and competing for space with the gold and greenfinches.

The hyperactive mole unwittingly provides contentment for everyone in the food chain except ourselves. The birds sense the moment he is on the move. Blackbirds, song thrushes — an overhunted rarity here — and even a pair of green woodpeckers wait for the pickings cast up with the mounds of fresh earth. Robins too, but they are exposed to the ever-watchful eyes of Artur, our neighbour's black cat, who must be feasting not only on feathers but on all those tasty half-digested worms and grubs as well.

The end is nigh so start sinning

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

"*WHAT* about a spot of television?" said the chap in the silk blouson with the middle parting (this was a glimpse of the future as envisaged in 1935). "Lovely!" trilled his womenfolk (who were waving on the doorstep as he arrived home in his autogyro). There was cricket on TV. Australia scored 2,855 for no wickets. "This," said the womenfolk tetchily, "is boring."

Sounds a good guess to me. This came from the cheap and cheerful **Crystal Balls** (BBC1), Griff Rhys Jones having a bit of fun with duff predictions. One of the duffest was The Amazing Criswell. His predictions on American TV in the fifties were goosepimplingly precise. He foresaw that on November 18, 1980, there would be an outbreak of uncontrollable cannibalism in Pittsburgh; on February 1, 1983, there would be an epidemic of female baldness in Illinois and on June 9, 1989, everyone in Denver would turn to jelly.

The Amazing Criswell sounds suspiciously like someone who has been thrown out of Pittsburgh, Illinois and Denver, Colorado. And his hat after him. This guy could carry a grudge the way Crosby carried a tune.

He reminds me of Lord George Brown who, long after he lost his Belper seat, turned up on Parkinson to say with visible satisfaction, "Belper has been wiped off the electoral map *and it serves the buggers right!*"

By the way, The Amazing Criswell said the world is going to end in 1999. He had a cautionary word for mockers: "Remember, we once laughed at television!" Indeed we did. Wasn't it wonderful then?

While we're on the subject of barefaced frauds, Channel 4's **Quiz Night** showed Charles Van Doren winning in the notorious quiz show, Twenty One. Van Doren had not only been given the answers but was coached in how to deliver them.

Taken simply as a thriller, Twenty One was a treat. The money mounted . . . Van Doren pretended to mop his brow . . . the extended commercials for Geritol ("Cures Tired Blood!") were agonising. Tired Blood is an ailment not much mentioned nowadays. Like Night Starvation. The idea that we might starve in our sleep because we weren't eating was particularly ingenious.

Quiz masters are always men and often stand-up comics, the most frightening life form yet evolved. The host of Family Feud explained the technique of the cheek tear to Bob Monkhouse.

"If you get a contestant who's hyper, trying to be funnier than you, be extra friendly to this putz. Put your arm on his upstage shoulder, slip your thumb into his mouth, smile at the guy, keep talking and tighten the pressure till it hurts. Quiets 'em right down."

Meanwhile how are things in Gloccamorra?

Well, in **Berkeley Square** (BBC1) the Countess of Harmondsworth has kidnapped Nurse Randall's child. "Give me the baby!" "Never!" Berkeley Square is not just soft-centred, it's liquescent. It is, however, based on the copper-bottomed dramatic principle of three well-assorted women. I refer you to The Three Sisters, King Lear and, above all, Ziegfeld Girl, in which Hedy Lamarr found true love, Judy Garland found fame, and Lana Turner found herself in the usual Lana Turner pickle.

There are three sisters in **Close Relations** (BBC1). Their Christmas party was disrupted by the arrival of their mother (Sheila Hancock), who said quietly, like someone puzzled by a small but piercing pain, "He's left me!"

Reckless of his recent heart attack, Gordon (Keith Barron) has fallen in love with April, his black nurse.

(In Crystal Balls the Professor of Theoretical Physics at New York university — no less — predicted, "In case of a heart attack, your clothes will immediately alert the authorities." Fat lot of use this will be to Gordon. From the moment he met April, he's never had his clothes on.)

You know how a snooker player can make two balls go in precise but different directions? As if smitten by fate's snooker cue, the couples in Close Relations are shooting off on different trajectories.

General applause

CINEMA
Richard Williams

WERE Brendan Gleeson already as firmly established in the public mind as a De Niro, a Depardieu or an Oldman, we might be describing his portrayal of the Irish gangster Martin Cahill, in John Boorman's The General, as his masterpiece. We don't yet know enough about him, despite his recent appearances in I Went Down and The Butcher Boy, to be certain of the real dimension of his talent. But his performance is still among the events of the year.

Complexity within simplicity is its secret. Cahill, assassinated outside his Dublin home in 1994, was a Catholic boy who grew up naughty in the slums of Hollyfield. Crime and its proceeds became his preoccupation. They put a roof over his family's heads, while the game of outwitting the law appealed to his prankish ingenuity. In some eyes, he had achieved the status of a folk hero by the time of his death at the age of 46.

Nevertheless these are deep waters. His criminal activities ran in parallel with, and sometimes cut across, the fund-raising ventures of the paramilitary forces, which meant trouble. Nor was his own nature clearly defined. He stole from the rich and gave some of his takings to the poor, but (as Boorman shows) apparently without a thought for the collateral damage caused to ordinary people. There are suggestions in Boorman's screenplay that Cahill's objective was not so much social justice as the sealing of allegiances, Godfather-style. He was a loving husband and father, yet capable of reacting to threats with a disproportionately lethal violence. Not much of the Robin Hood there.

Gleeson begins his portrait with the creation of a remarkable physical likeness. Bulking his body up into a shambling slobbishness, he parts his hair half an inch above his right ear, combing it over his skull into a lank flap that would be the envy of the 1970-model Bobby Charlton, and develops Cahill's trademark gesture of walking around with his hands half-obscuring his face. But there are subtler signals, such as the art of smiling with his mouth while letting his eyes tell a different message.



Brendan Gleeson (left with Jon Voight) gives one of the best cinematic performances of the year

In recreating Cahill's reckless charm, Gleeson manages to persuade us that such a man could be loved not just by his wife, Frances, but by her younger sister, Tina, and that these two women would agree to live with him in separate but concurrent households, sharing the bearing and nurture of his several children. Gleeson convinces us of this without straining for effect.

And yet, to judge from Boorman's own published account of the making of The General, few films since Apocalypse Now can have been tougher to get to the screen. The award of the Best Director prize at Cannes last month must have seemed not so much a recognition of his cinematic gifts as the reward for the persistence with which he negotiated a series of financial, legal and political complexities.

Whatever the cost of that struggle, it was never at the expense of the art. Every detail of the story and characterisation has clearly been weighed by a mature writer-director fully aware of his responsibility to balance dramatic entertainment — humour as well as suspense — with a care for historical truth.

Boorman's decision to shoot in black and white is harder to praise. Black and white is generally used to evoke either a sense of the past or a gritty realism — sometimes, as with Rumble Fish and Schindler's List, a bit of both at the same time. According to Boorman, his intention was to avoid the prettifying effects of colour, but also to give the film a mythic quality. These two aims seem hard to reconcile in a film based on recent factual events, and The General is actually a lot prettier than, say, Nil By Mouth or Western, realist films shot in uncosmetic colour. The General's attractive texture has the unintended effect of sentimentalising the story.

The impression is deepened by Richie Buckley's incidental music, which employs various forms of bluesy jazz to heighten suspense or decorate romance. The use of Van Morrison's songs, one during a burglary and another over the credits, is a thumping modern cliché, a bit of instant local colour.

These flaws, however, are pretty well obliterated by the quantity of fine acting on view, not just from Gleeson but from Maria Doyle Kennedy and Angeline Ball (reunited for the first time since The Commitments) as the sisters, from Adrian Dunbar and Sean McGinley as Cahill's lieutenants, and — above all — from Jon Voight as a Dublin police inspector on Cahill's trail. This is Voight's third substantial performance of the late nineties, following Heat and The Rainmaker. His puffy face and pale, introspective gaze are beautifully photographed by Seamus Deasy, and his world-weary delivery suits the resonant economy of Boorman's lines: "Can't you feel it, Martin? There's a bullet coming."

Watch out, too, for Aoife Moriarty, who plays the young Frances, falling for the 11-year-old Martin (Eamonn Owens, already grown a little taller since The Butcher Boy) over a stolen cream bun. If that's not a face with a destiny, I'll be amazed.

Emotion in sharp relief

OPERA
Andrew Clements

KATA Kabanová began a trilogy of Janácek stagings at Glyndebourne as long ago as 1988, but you'd never guess its age, from the latest revival, supervised by the original director, Nikolaus Lehnhoff, which comes up fresh and vivid with all the prickling tension of something newly minted.

British audiences may have been spoilt by a succession of great Janácek productions over the past two decades, but this one is still very special.

Tobias Hoheisel's designs really define the feel of this ever-intelligent, closely observed production. There isn't a trace of the angst-ridden naturalism of conventional stagings of the opera, usually decked out in various shades of grey. Instead, Hoheisel has invented a stylised, brightly coloured world which sets the pathetic domestic tragedy of the super-concentrated drama in sharp relief.

Though under Wolfgang Göbbel's magical lighting these settings may sometimes suggest a detached toy-town world, the human emotions etched upon them are horribly real, so that the ghastly, claustrophobic trajectory of the story never falters.

Tracking that spiral into disaster are two central performances. Amanda Roocroft, singing the title role for the first time, assembles a beautifully crafted portrait of a woman at the end of her tether, trapped in a household with a husband she does not love and a mother-in-law who humiliates her.

Roocroft's tone is sometimes too unvaried, and there is not much sexual electricity around her encounters with her lover Boris (Christian Papis, the one underpowered performance in the cast), but the way in which physically she invents this woman and her tortured guilt on stage is compelling.

Her dark opposite is the Kabanicha of Helga Dernesch, whose voice may no longer have the ringing power it possessed when she was one of the leading Wagnerian sopranos of her generation, but whose authority as she dominates the stage is as formidable as ever. Every one of her phrases makes the flesh creep: the implacable cruelty to Kát'a is chilling: the iron control of her son Tichon — Neill Archer nicely suggesting a weak man hopelessly torn between filial duty and unfaltering love for his wife — is absolute.

The rest may be more or less cameos, but like every other component, they are all perfectly judged — Andrew Shore's Dikoj, the only person, Lehnhoff's reading suggests, who actually enjoys being dominated by the Kabanicha; Timothy Robinson's folksy Kudrjaš; Linda Tuvas's sparky Varvara.

Each is precisely placed in its dramatic context, to create a fabric that is as carefully blocked as the stage pictures, while under Yakov Kreizberg the London Philharmonic picks out every telling orchestral detail and makes it live just as fully as the characters.

Janácek doesn't waste a note and neither does Kreizberg; this masterly and comprehensive account of the score sets the seal on a show that represents the Glyndebourne ethos at its best.

Suspended animation . . . Thirty Pieces of Silver by Cornelia Parker PHOTOGRAPH: HUGO GLENDINNING

What the butler saw

ART
Adrian Searle

THERE is a great photograph in the catalogue for Cornelia Parker's current solo exhibition at London's Serpentine Gallery (until June 14). A collection of silverware has been carefully arranged on a country road. We see an agglomeration of silver-plated candlesticks, salvers, fruit bowls, communion cups, toast racks, a trombone: more than a thousand pieces of tableware and plate curve away into the distance, where they disappear under the gargantuan front wheel of a steamroller, which is slowly trundling towards us.

The photograph belongs not to the age of silent-movie gags, but to the more recent history of installation art. It was taken in 1988, as part of the documentation of the making of Parker's Thirty Pieces Of Silver, now hanging at the Serpentine. The flattened silverware was later gathered up and hung on silver wire, forming 30 horizontal discs suspended at shin height. You wander between them, looking down at the individually suspended items: a flattened flute, the servers and salvers and crushed teapots, the mangled toast-rack, the items jostling, tinkling and twanging as you accidentally brush the wires. The effect is to echo the lily pads on Monet's pond. It is rather beautiful and delicate, as well as absurd in conception and violent in its creation.

Cornelia Parker's return to the Serpentine comes three years after her celebrated collaboration with the actress Tilda Swinton, The Maybe, in which Swinton famously spent a week lying in a vitrine. Parker, whom we most recently saw in last year's Turner Prize show at the Tate, revisits the Serpentine with a selection of works from the past decade. "Rarely has conceptual art been so accessible," was the verdict of one commentator. Conceptual art? Accessible? The whole point of conceptual art, surely, is to be as inaccessible and cultish as possible. What is this: Conceptual Art Lite? No: Parker's work creeps up on you, and it isn't so much the appearance of many of her works that captivates, rather it is the introvertedness, the single-minded peculiarity of the pursuit that is so effective.

Thirty Pieces Of Silver is undoubtedly meant to make you think of Biblical betrayal. I'm tempted to supply my own story. A butler, high on the fumes of silver polish from a day's rubbing and shining in his pantry, when he'd much rather be off with the parlour maid rubbing and panting elsewhere, rushes out and commandeers a passing steamroller. In a fit of joyous anarchy, he trashes the silver and shows his employer what he thinks of the servant's lot. At its best, Parker's work provokes intrigues and fictions, and opens up a space for the viewer's imagination to go to work.

To my mind, the stories that Parker's work provokes are its strongest feature. The Dress Shot By Small Change (Contents of Pockets) and Suit Shot By A Pearl Necklace (both, the catalogue entry tells us, "with special, thanks to Colt Firearms") look a bit moth-eaten, till one reads the titles. Then one imagines a story of love, deceit and revenge, culminating in a bizarre crime of passion that would bamboozle the hardiest detective. The guy in the suit shoots the girl in the little black dress with the pearls he'd given her as she rounds on him with a barrel full of small change, taken from his pocket. It is the imaginary lead-up that is so intriguing.

Parker's display of a dictionary "shot in the back by dice", the dice mired in a flurry of words, is surely a tale of a writer's revenge on his lexicon, when words have once again failed him. The work is already consummate as an idea, and doesn't need to be illustrated by being made.

This is often Parker's weak point. She is also the artist who wanted to return a meteorite to outer space. "To have a meteorite suspended without wire outside Earth's gravity", exists only as a fragment of text, as Parker has so far failed to persuade anyone to finance sending a meteor back into space. Other works do need to have been realised, if only so one can imagine the protracted negotiations Parker has got involved in to bring them about. Collecting the tarnish from the inside of Henry VIII's suit of armour, from Darwin's sextant, from Dickens's table knife and Jim Bowie's soup spoon, and displaying the soiled handkerchiefs with which she wiped the oxidised metal, is a very odd activity indeed. And one imagines Bowie and Dickens at table, dining together and dipping into Samuel Colt's soup tureen. What did they talk about? The American Constitution? Slaughtering Injuns? Is Brasso better than Glitto? We shall never know, but we can make it up.

The hair of a woolly mammoth, combed into the shape of a walrus moustache; a salt-block licked away by giraffes and hung at giraffe head-height (this accidental "sculpture" looks exactly like a spinal vertebrae); a couple of wooden blocks, chewed or tusked by elephants, and which look exactly like German Expressionist carvings, are pleasing conversation pieces. Parker is good at the one-liner, the artistic aside.

Getting a silversmith to extrude a silver dollar into a piece of wire as long as the Statue of Liberty is tall, or flattening coins on a railway line and them suspending them on the shape of two hovering figures, is odd, and fun, as is Parker's display of everyday items cut by the blunted blade of the guillotine used to decapitate Marie Antoinette. To know what Parker does is almost enough. But I guess someone has to do it, if only to give us something to write about, and to imagine for ourselves.

Comic cruelty in a domestic drama

DANCE
Judith Mackrell

TURNING World, London's annual season of new European dance, is usually rich in dark continental angst and fashionably honed absurdity. But its opening show, by the German choreographer Sasha Waltz, bears a surprising resemblance to the seedy TV world of Alan Partridge. In Allee Der Kosmonauten the stage is dominated by flock wallpaper and a Bri-Nylon sofa, and the characters' shellsuits, Brylcreemed hair and saggy stockings are badges of a flamboyant lack of charm. Yet even while Waltz explores a vein of surreal comic cruelty, she develops a domestic drama that's compellingly real.

Her performers represent three generations of an urban family, united by their physical weirdness. The father, with his defeated stoop and baggy trousers, keeps sloping off to play his accordion, drifting into fantasies of lederhosen and Alpine meadows. The older son is wracked by violent tics and sexual urges, while the youngest daughter is a flying banshee of prepubescent tears and tantrums.

The life of this family is crammed into a dense and wittily edited sequence of events, which changes gear at brilliant speed. The mother, vacantly tidying, suddenly flings around her vacuum in a wild and rebellious pas de deux, while escalating rows suddenly crash into longueurs of listless boredom. Waltz switches from shock tactics (the little girl masturbating) to slapstick (the older son wielding a huge wooden plank that the others just manage to duck before it renders them unconscious).

Waltz is also interested in the crossover between real gesture and dance, and she often abstracts these sequences into pure choreography. Her sense of rhythm is so acute that she manages to hold both in tension: the little girl's stamping fury develops into a complex percussive variation. Allee Der Kosmonauten works triumphantly as both human document and dance.

As dance, it occasionally displays a hard-edged dynamic similar to the work of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, who is often vaunted as the doyenne of new European dance. Yet as Turning World's revival of her 1987 work Mikrokosmos reveals, De Keersmaeker's reputation has been preposterously inflated. Compared with Waltz's show, this three-part work is empty, pretentious stuff.

Its opening section, set to Bartok's Seven Pieces For Two Pianos, is a self-consciously neurotic duet in which a man and woman circle each other's personal space. They signal warily via little glances and gestures and then explode into high-powered phrases of dance. These abrupt shifts of scale and speed can be exhilarating, but most of the dance remains an aimless tracking around the stage. While Waltz can suggest an entire personality with a single physical tic, De Keersmaeker's man and woman remain ciphers.

The work's final section (to Bartok's 4th String Quartet) has more substance, as four women wheel around the stage with the humming, disciplined energy of a troupe of circus horses. The dynamic shading within their repetitive dance sequences is impressive, but unfortunately it doesn't prevent the severely restricted material — about six steps in all — from becoming irksome to watch. Even more irksome are the mannerisms, for De Keersmaeker has an unfathomable habit of foisting little girly gestures on her dancers.

This is a shame, because the stage on which they dance is marvellously grown-up. A sumptuously lit set unites orderly rows of cacti, red plush chairs and two grand pianos into a powerfully symmetrical composition. And in the middle section, when the two pianists are left alone to play music by Ligeti, our relief at the dancers' absence is doubled by the surprise satisfaction of this intensely theatrical staging of concert music.

Road back to Wigan pier

POP
Sam Wollaston

IT MUST have hit Richard Ashcroft how huge The Verve have become, looking down at 32,000 people on a hillside singing along to every one of his words. The last time they played their home town was at the Upholland Working Men's Club, just up the road from Winstanley Sixth Form College where they first got together.

A lot's happened since then. They teetered on the edge, toppled over it, climbed back on, fell apart, got back together. Which took about seven years, and two albums. Then last year they brought out a third, Urban Hymns, and became one of the biggest bands in the world.

And they're from Wigan — previously only on the map for rugby league, George Formby and a pier.

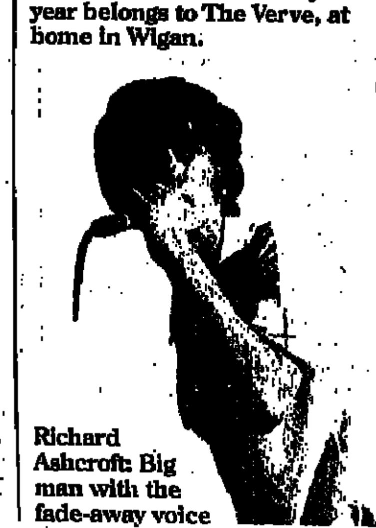
"We've been saving it all up for this moment," said Ashcroft, and it seemed they had. It was a set worthy of an emotional homecoming. From the opener, This Is Music, he had Wigan in his hand.

Ashcroft is an insect-like figure with a big presence, which suits his distinctive, fading-away voice. He moves round the stage with knees bent, awkward yet arrogant, at times verging on messianic. There were plenty of lookalikes in the crowd.

Equally important is lead guitarist Nick McCabe, rooted to one spot all night, invisible under a floppy fringe. He might have his differences with Ashcroft, but The Verve wouldn't be the same without him. His deft, and sometimes daft, wizardry save the band from degenerating into anthemic pub rock.

The slower The Verve are, the better. So Sonnet, Neon Wilderness and Velvet Morning were perfect. And although they lacked live strings, Bitter Sweet Symphony and The Drugs Don't Work — tunes you'd expect to be totally bored with — were beautiful. Let's hope we don't lose interest in The Verve as we have with other well known British bands.

It might not have been the balmy summer evening it could have been, but the melancholy of an ominous, steely sky with a brisk Lancashire breeze suited them well. In 1996, it was Oasis at Maine Road. Last year, it was Radiohead at Glastonbury. This year belongs to The Verve, at home in Wigan.



Richard Ashcroft: Big man with the fade-away voice

First-rate life of a second-rate man

David Cannadine

Osbert Sitwell
by Philip Ziegler
Chatto & Windus 461pp £25

OSBERT SITWELL was a complex and contradictory character. He was a broad-acred baronet, but he did not hunt or shoot or fish, and he had a pacifist's loathing of war. He wanted to be recognised as a serious, creative artist, but he lacked imagination, his poetry was mediocre, his novels were not even that, and his multi-volume autobiography is today largely unread. He was a generous patron to such rising talents as Wilfred Owen, William Walton, Dylan Thomas and John Piper, but his literary feuds with Noël Coward, D H Lawrence, Aldous Huxley and Wyndham Lewis were vicious and protracted. Like his elder sister, Edith, and his younger brother, Sacheverell, Osbert Sitwell was a brilliant self-publicist and self-promoter, but he was also by nature shy, lonely, insecure, highly strung, and bad-tempered.

Inevitably he was much written about (and written against) during his life, especially in the inter-war years, when he regularly appeared as a thinly disguised (and not always flatteringly portrayed) fictional character. But since his death in 1967, Osbert has been the least regarded of "the Sitwells". It is only now, 30 years after Osbert's death, that Philip Ziegler has completed the family triangle with this assured and accomplished life.

Osbert was born in 1892, the son of parents who were eccentric even by the most exacting standards of patrician waywardness. His father was by turns clever, arrogant, ridiculous and utterly self-absorbed. His mother was a foolish and irresponsible spendthrift, and in 1915 she was sent to jail for debt. This was hardly a stable or secure family background. He himself endured another form of incarceration at public school, and was later to claim that he had been "educated in the holidays from Eton". But like much that he wrote about himself, this was exaggerated. He was already reading widely and well, and had conceived the ambition of becoming a poet.

Naturally his father had other ideas and Osbert was promptly sent off into the army. But his time in the trenches only convinced him of the utter waste and futility of war. Thereafter he preferred to fight with words rather than with weapons, and during the twenties and thirties, that is precisely what he did. In close alliance with his brother and sister, "the Sitwells" promoted themselves as a provocative, revolutionary trio, mocking the philistine middle classes and the Victorian old men, and proclaiming the arrival of a new, irreverent generation of bright and belligerent young things. Their greatest triumph was Façade — nonsense poetry declaimed through a megaphone to Walton's music, which was so audaciously innovative that there was a riot on the first night. Or so the Sitwells liked to claim.

BUT the joke was really on them; for much of their celebrity was truly little more than a façade. Osbert's poetry was neither original nor important in the way that T S Eliot's was. Indeed, his real literary success during the inter-war years was in the more conventional realms of journalism and as a writer of middle-brow travel books. And for all his wish to be thought an artistic revolutionary, his social and political views were decidedly (and increasingly) conservative. He disliked Jews, admired authoritarian political regimes, enjoyed London society and country-house life, and was a fervent and fawning monarchist. He was also very discreet about his homosexuality, and settled down to a long-term relationship with his live-in lover, David Horner, which lasted for more than 30 years.

The second world war thus seemed to threaten everything Osbert believed in. He regarded Winston Churchill as a vainglorious buffoon, refused to believe stories of Nazi atrocities, and successfully defended Renishaw, the family home in Derbyshire, from requisitioning. He took consolation in writing his vast autobiography, which vividly evoked the vanished world of his privileged youth, enabled him to settle his scores with his father on his own terms, and became an unexpected bestseller.

But this belated literary success was accompanied by premature personal misfortune: in 1950, Osbert was diagnosed as suffering from Parkinson's disease, and thereafter his life was one sad, slow, inexorable decline — accompanied by further rows and rages and recriminations which did not abate until the very end. He fell out with Sacheverell and his wife Georgia, split up acrimoniously with David Horner, and went into exile at Montegufoni, the vast Italian castle which his father had originally purchased in part as a place of refuge from his wife. Osbert's final years were miserable in the extreme, and visits from his sister, Edith, can scarcely have cheered him up, since she was as much of an invalid as he was, and in fact died before him.

But Osbert had one last, posthumous stroke of luck, which was to have his life written by Philip Ziegler, one of the most experienced and versatile biographers of his generation, who has produced another predictably polished and professional product. There are some splendid stories and excellent jokes. The lighter and darker sides of Osbert's character are fully and fairly presented. The result is a vivid, wholly satisfying biography, which restores Osbert to his rightful place as the most significant Sitwell sibling. It is a first-rate life — of a second-rate man.

Osbert Sitwell: a vivid, wholly satisfying biography PHOTO: JANE BOWN

Chronicles of a rude awakening

Nicholas Clee

Dream Children
by A N Wilson
John Murray 218pp £15.99

A N WILSON occupies an uneasy position among contemporary novelists. He was selected as one of the Best of Young British Novelists by Granta in the 1983 crop, which also included Amis, Barnes, Boyd, McEwan and Rushdie — and has won three major fiction awards; yet he is no longer taken quite seriously.

Perhaps journalism has been for him, as it is for the scholarly central character of Dream Children, "a trap", leading him to be regarded as primarily a controversialist.

Over his frequent books, both fiction and non-fiction, there hangs a suspicion of glibness. The authorial omniscience in his novels, the confident irony, the quotation marks applied to colloquialisms, and the apparent belief that synonyms for "wireless" are vulgar: they are all rather old hat.

It comes as a surprise to find him tackling what he calls in Dream Children "the modish subject of child abuse". But of course his treatment of it is not a bit modish. The novel is all the more effective for that.

A prologue takes place in an American courtroom, where an unnamed woman is accusing an unnamed man of having abused her.

Cut to a house in Muswell Hill. A 10-year-old girl, Roberta (Bobs), is announcing that the household's lodger, a philosopher called Oliver Gold, is engaged to be married. The news is a blow to all the women in the house: to Janet Rose, a widow who fancies herself as an intellectuals' earth mother; to Janet's daughter Michal; to Catherine Cuffe, an academic and Michal's lover; and to Lotte, the unstable Austrian au pair. All are in thrall to Oliver. So, we discover, is Bobs; and he to her.

Oliver is considered by his admirers to be "the greatest thinker of the late 20th century" and "the most brilliant man of his generation". Wilson at first encourages us to regard the character, despite the lack of any achievements to support these accolades, as a figure of some stature. Next, he seduces us into giving a sympathetic hearing to Oliver's thoughts about the harmlessness of his paedophiliac inclinations.

We might be alerted to authorial irony when Oliver refers to Nazism and communism as "dogmas of almost boundless vulgarity"; but one reviewer has already suggested that this description reflects the author's view.

When Oliver comes to believe that the notebooks in which he chronicles his obsession with Bobs are "altogether superior" to the works of Hazlitt and Rousseau, and that the discovery of the notebooks means that "the kindest thing" will be to kill Bobs and himself, the author's sympathies become clearer.

Had they been obvious from the outset, Dream Children would indeed have been "modish": a mere demonstration of widely held views. Instead, Wilson unsettles his readers. He has taken considerable risks in this book, and deserves praise for his skill in negotiating them.

Paperbacks

Isobel Montgomery

Beach Boy, by Ardashir Vakil (Penguin, £6.99)

CYRUS Readymoney is hungry for Hindi films, marsala chips, cola, samosas — and in a great hurry to grow up. Yet his adolescence is troubled by a growing awareness that adulthood is a complicated maze to be negotiated with care. Beach Boy captures the brilliantly acute perceptions of adolescence, the minutiae of a world bounded by Cyrus's street, school friends and the beach. When his world suddenly changes, Cyrus's previous happy existence takes on the poignancy of a lost Eden.

Cromartie v The God Shiva Acting Through the Government of India, by Rumer Godden (Pan, £5.99)

A YOUNG lawyer, Michael Dean, is sent from his Rumpolesque chambers in London to India to deal with the theft of a statue of the God Shiva. India, playing the role so often assigned to it by Western novelists, is to be his teacher. Before you can say Agatha Christie Michael is shaping up as a bit of a sleuth and has fallen in love with Artemis, a beautiful archaeologist. She is, of course, as elusive as the statue. Rumer Godden, who celebrated her 90th birthday last year, seems more of a tourist in India than she used to be.

Flemington and Tales from Angus, by Violet Jacobs (Canongate, £7.99)

WRITTEN during the first world war and the 1920s these tales of Scottish lowland life have the Gothic intensity of a century earlier. Its insights into the motivations of men and women have the wit of Jane Austen with none of the optimism. With Flemington, a novel set during the Jacobite Rising of 1745, which betrays the debt she owes to Walter Scott, this collection should resurrect Jacobs's dark yet humorous voice.

Bread for the Departed, by Bogdan Wojdowski, trs by Madeline G Levine (NorthWestern University Press, £12.99)

INFUSED with the tempo of the Old Testament, the rhythms of Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish and German, Bread For The Departed is an unflinching, yet poetic account of life in the Warsaw Ghetto. A series of increasingly nightmarish vignettes describes how the young inhabitants become at first street children then barely human as they forage for food in and beyond the ghetto walls.

Letters Of The Late Ignatius Sancho, An African, ed. Vincent Carretta (Penguin Classics, £7.99)

IGNATIUS SANCHO was the only recorded black voter in England in the 18th century, a critic of the British in India and of African complicity in the slave trade and an 18th century man of letters. He was a slave, a butler, an actor manqué and a grocer. He corresponded with Sterne, was a friend of Garrick and had his portrait painted by Gainsborough, and his letters provide an unusual insight into late 18th-century life. A fascinating man. — *Desmond Christy*

Sexual healing

Mark Lawson

Riven Rock
by T Coraghessan Boyle
Bloomsbury 468pp £16.99

THE novelist John Updike, once pressed by an interviewer on the low political content of his books, responded that each of his books could have been written only at that moment in history and under a particular president. Few novels have more obeyed that formula than Riven Rock, the seventh by the American historico-comic fabulist T Coraghessan Boyle.

Set in the first two decades of this century against a background of scientific and medical discoveries — and featuring a central character who must be kept locked away because he cannot be trusted with women — Riven Rock is a historical novel which feels both millennial and Clintonian.

Boyle has made his reputation as an eccentric who writes about mavericks — or vice versa. The eye-catcher name on the jacket is invented (he was Christened simply Thomas John Boyle) and the author photo — Van Dyke beard and floral shirt captured with a sepia tint — suggests a throwback to an earlier age. His plots often make the same journey, rediscovering in American history characters once called unforgettable but now forgotten.

In Riven Rock, Am Lit's cackling and subversive historian displays another weird-but-true creature from his researches. In 1905, Stanley McCormick, heir to a Chicago fortune amassed by his inventor father, marries the socialite Katherine Dexter. But she rapidly becomes a "newlywed who might as well have been a widow".

Stanley has inherited the schizophrenia which has already claimed a sister, who added a sexual dimension to her brother's condition by exposing herself to him in his infancy. Celibate in the wedding bed, Stanley is sexually incontinent with any other female. After an attempted rape, he is condemned by doctors to live in a "world without women" at Riven Rock, the family's remote California fastness. In the 20 years he spends there, he is treated by three doctors, each applying emergent medical wisdoms. The first, Dr Hamilton, believing the answer to lie in the sexual behaviour of apes, transports a huge pack of primates to California. Finally, it is the Freudian who triumphs.



T Coraghessan Boyle: a cackling and subversive historian

This is a compelling set-up for a novel. Early on, you want to buy copies for your friends; soon after that, you want to buy the film rights for yourself. The big scenes — involving Hamilton's apes or the transporting of McCormick to California in a sealed train — are screaming to be screenplayed.

But — as in his last novel, The Tortilla Curtain, which dealt with racism and immigration — Boyle wants his thundering narrative to carry ideological freight. The novel seems to suggest that the central character's sexual sickness is merely an extreme and diagnosed version of standard male attitudes towards women. When one of McCormick's attendants tells a girlfriend of the patient's symptoms, she replies: "Sounds like the average man to me."

The book sets against this ape-like priapism the intelligence and decency of Katherine, the widow with a living husband. One of the first female college graduates, she becomes a campaigner for female emancipation and contraception. (Cumbersome early barrier methods are a source of eye-watering comedy.) Thus, with structural neatness, she fills the long wait for her husband's cure by trying to free other women from being prisoners of sex and gender. The strong and honest Katherine seems designed to make the point that women are better than men and make men better.

This is a male feminist novel, though of a sentimental kind. Katherine never abandons Stanley. She waits for him to come home from the war of his hormones.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £15 contact CultureShop (see page 28)

Bunking off with a choir of angels

Tom Adir

The Sopranos
by Alan Warner
Cape 324pp £9.99

ALAN WARNER burst through the wave of new Scottish writing in 1995 with Morvern Caller, a book of rare amoral counter-chic. Morvern strutted her existential stuff, like Mersault's granddaughter sprung from hell.

These Demented Lands (1997), Warner's crackling, surreal follow-up, set on an island, was an apocalyptic version of Hamish MacBeth.

In The Sopranos, Morvern Caller is merely mentioned, while her younger counterparts head for Edinburgh with Sisters Fagan and Condron, nuns at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour high school, to sing in a choir competition. As their rickety school coach heads for the lights, the sex-obsessed, booze-prone teenage bevy are bent on a binge, spinning in a dizzying downward spiral.

Back at the Port, Father Ardlui, the high school's priest, and Lord Bolivia, a kleptomaniac parrot, keep an eye on each other. The priest is the essence of maudlin, restless loneliness; his other eye is set on becoming a novelist, putting Ardlui on the map. But he has a gender disability, being male in a book obsessed with its nubile clutch of aspiring slatterns.

In the hours ticking up to the sing-off, the six girls swarm over the city, shoplifting, body-piercing, boozing, taunting and tantalising the bar-loafing male population.

They speak in great riffs of seasoned jest and innuendo — "Scotsperanto" — part of the pure linguistic glitter that makes this book joyous, touting as it does such stuff as the verbs to gleer, to bammer, to hootsy and gigglestifle.

Kylah (big voice), Orla (threatened by leukaemia), Manda (sex fiend), jealous of Kay (the one with brains), who's moved in on Fionnula (pretty, but gutted about the future), and Chell (who once saved a teacher's life), grow tendrils of sisterly affection, knotted by tensions, snipped by spite, but united in a conspiracy of defiance against the world.

The novel reeks of raw truth; it points up the moral numbness that faces the girls on their slide to the future. It also reveals their sense of dread that the way is blocked and bleak, with only Ardlui at the port, a *deus ex machina*, offering sin as their last-gasp means of touching freedom. Ardlui might also have rescued the book from the linearity, but Warner affords him no gravitational pull. Perhaps he is saving him, to be Morvern Caller's confessor.

Anglo-Saxon beatitudes

A S Byatt

In Memory of England
by Peter Vansittart
John Murray 298pp £20

IN MEMORY Of England is a subtle and evocative title. My wartime generation grew up with an English story, part myth, part history, which we put together from Robin Hood, Walter Scott, King Arthur, 1066 And All That, Cavaliers and Roundheads, Regency Romance, and boys' own tales of heroism in the tropics and on the Somme.

We learned chronological English history at school. Its disappearance distressed Mrs Thatcher, though I suspect the myth she wanted to reinstate differs from Peter Vansittart's. He calls his splendid book "a novelist's view of England". It is a wise, learned and idiosyncratic re-creation of the story, which will look different to those who have known it all their lives, and those like my daughter, who has a deep modular knowledge of the Russian Revolution, Crime and Punishment in 17th century Wales, and the first world war.

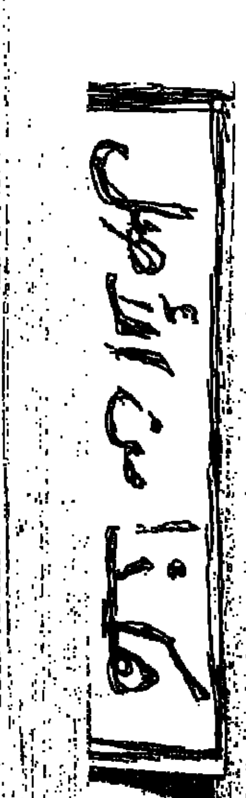
Vansittart begins with Arthurian Britain, Roman Britain, and Albion, moving on to the Anglo-Saxons and Merrie England. Like all biographies, this history lingers in the early stages. Time, space and character seem leisurely and sharp in outline in the far past. Later chapters, begin to gallop as the number of characters and ideas and events increase. Vansittart is a wonderful novelist and storyteller, and his history is a texture of brilliant lists, unforgettable quotations, surprising juxtapositions. He has his heroes — the rational, the imaginative, the generous. They begin with the theologian Pelagius, opponent of the idea of original Sin, and include Elizabeth I, Dr Johnson, the judicious Hooker and the sceptic Hobbes.

His juxtapositions work by tracing an attitude, a trait, from past to present. He quotes Elizabeth I with approval; she "defined theology as ropes of sand or sea-slime leading to the moon: 'There is but one Faith and one Jesus Christ, the rest is a dispute about trifles.'" Next to her he quotes Clem Attlee — "Accept the Christian ethic. Can't stand the mumbo-jumbo." He quotes Edward Bond: "We badly abuse Shakespeare if we pretend he knows all the answers. He doesn't. He knows the questions."

What does Vansittart think of as English? He notes, even in Pelagius, a characteristic disposition to grumble. He notes humour, quoting Congreve, who says that humour is almost of English growth (meaning in 1695 as much a disposition to suit oneself as a sense of the comic). He notes the advantages and limitations of irony. He has a few wise and wry pages on the British conduct of the British Empire, quoting Gandhi's summing-up of the English: "An Englishman never respects you until you stand up to him. Then he begins to like you. He is afraid of nothing physical, but he is very mortally afraid of his own conscience if you ever appeal to it and show him to be in the wrong."

It opens with a wonderful chapter on the English language, from the rhythms of the Anglo-Saxon — "That passed. So may this" — to the precision of D J Enright: "I try to write lucidly . . ." Vansittart's values are implicit in, and inseparable from, good English. We have grown, or been shocked, out of feeling that "English" values of "decency", understatement, common sense and irony are either universal, or universally desirable. That doesn't mean they aren't values.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £18 contact CultureShop (see page 28)



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
June 7 1998

Flower power beats Rhodo Cop

Paul Evans

THE hillside looks like a battlefield, a mass of twisted, shattered branches and battered leaves. The frantic, banshee noise of the flailing, crawling machine responsible for this devastation has been stilled. It stands broken down at the bottom of the slope. A sign painted above the cab reads "Rhodo Cop". For the moment there is a respite in the battle between conservationists and the dark impenetrable forest. Rhodo Cop is down and the rhododendron is back on top.

This is Snowdonia National Park in North Wales, one of the most beautiful and ecologically special places in the British Isles. Here the war against *R. ponticum* has been waged for more than 20 years. To many this is a baffling conflict. "Ah, how pretty," say the coachloads of tourists on daytrips to see the flowering forest. "Devastating. Biodiversity enemy number one," say the conservationists. It's a battle for survival, and casualties on both sides are heavy.

For the next couple of weeks, *Rhododendron ponticum* gathers its energy from hillsides and Welsh rain for its lilac-like, violet-pink spectacular. It is a remarkable plant. A native of Bulgaria, Turkey, Lebanon and the Caucasus, but with isolated populations in Spain and Portugal, this large flowering shrub is perfectly at home in Wales. Fossils of this rhododendron have been found in peat deposits from Ireland, so it is assumed that it was native to parts of the British Isles during the last inter-glacial period.

Perhaps had it not been for an accident of history *R. ponticum* might have been a British native. But it is certainly making up for millennia of lost time, having been introduced to Britain as a garden plant, possibly from Gibraltar, in 1763. There is a suspicion that *R. ponticum* may have hybridised with American species of rhododendron introduced into British gardens around the same period. This may have triggered what some ecologists call its genetic time-bomb, which has made it a vigorous, some say aggressive, invasive introduction.



ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

It is easy to apply these anthropomorphic characteristics to *R. ponticum*. Particularly if you're trying to protect the vulnerable native plants that it is swamping. The plant is evergreen and fast growing, forming dense, impenetrable stands very quickly. Its roots produce a toxin that kills off anything that can stand its shade. Nothing feeds on it and nothing out-grows it. Where it grows, native plants and insects don't. It can survive in forests or hillsides, and in southern and western Britain and Ireland it is responsible for wiping out large tracts of native flora.

In Snowdonia, famous for its "Atlantic woodland" and rare mosses, liverworts and lichens, *R. ponticum* has caused ecological upheaval. As soon as one stand is cut down, unless it is poisoned with herbicides, it will regenerate. By that time the seedlings will be forming new stands further up the mountain. Hacking at the problem bit by bit was getting nowhere. With the arrival of Rhodo Cop, large areas can be attacked with more long-lasting results. But the estimated cost of removal is $73 million, and there is no political will to justify such a budget.

Conservationists face an uphill battle. *R. ponticum* has an admiring public who have difficulty relating to tiny, rare and vulnerable plants that are being lost, so a public mandate for its eradication is as difficult to secure as the plant is to get rid of. There is no doubt that *R. ponticum* is here to stay. A thousand Rhodo Cops won't change that.

Chess Leonard Barden

DAVID HOOPER, who died last month aged 82, was one of the leading British masters and chess historians of his time. As a player, he was runner-up in the first Swiss system British championship in 1949, and played for England in the 1952 Olympiad; but it was as a writer that he excelled.

Hooper first specialised in endgames and in collections of the world champions; his Pocket Guide To Chess Endings (1970) is still the best I know for rapid assimilation of basic ideas, its economical clarity reflecting Hooper's career as an architect.

The Unknown Capablanca (1975) contained many games from the legendary Cuban's matches and exhibitions. The book had a seminal influence on English chess. At a time when we were looking for new ways to encourage juniors, David told me how the Soviets had put out their best talents in teams against Capa.

Following the then 14-year-old Botvinnik's win in a 1925 simul, Russian squads packed with top juniors won 20 games against the Cuban in displays during Moscow 1935. David concluded that the most inspiring result for a boy or girl was to do well against a world champion, and urged England to follow the Soviet path.

So between 1974 and 1985 every Soviet world champion, from Botvinnik down to Kasparov, was lured into simuls against squads which some Russians believed consisted of inexperienced children, but which turned out to be full of future GMs and IMs. Petrosian narrowly escaped overall defeat on 30 boards, Spassky only beat one of his top 10 opponents, Karpov had the worst simul result of his life, and, most important, England juniors discovered they could defeat great masters.

Nigel Short received a copy of The Unknown Capablanca, autographed by David, for his tenth birthday in 1975. That summer he won several strategic games in a Cuban style.

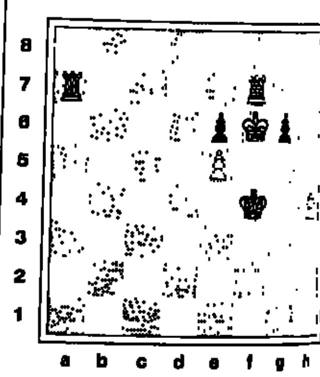
Hooper's finest work was as co-author (with Ken Whyld) of The Oxford Companion To Chess, a scholarly yet highly readable collection of biographies, reference material and games. It has been widely acclaimed as a masterpiece and is essential reading for enthusiasts.

As a player, David liked a tactical finish to his lucid strategy, as in this game which helped him win the 1944 British correspondence championship.

D Hooper v J Eriksen

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 c5 4 Ngf3 Nf6 5 Bb5+ Nc6 6 exd5 Nxd5 7 Nb3 cxd4 8 Nbxd4 Bd7 9 Nxc6 bxc6 10 Be2 Qc7 11 0-0 Be7 12 Re1 0-0 13 c4 Nf6 14 Bd3 c5 15 Qc2 g6 16 b3 Ne8 17 Bh6 Ng7 18 Qc3 f6 19 Ng5 e5 20 Be4 fxg5 21 Bxa8 Rxa8 22 Bxg7 Kxg7 23 Rxe5 Kf7 24 Rxe7+ Kxe7 25 Re1+ Kf7 26 Qf3+ Resigns.

No 2526

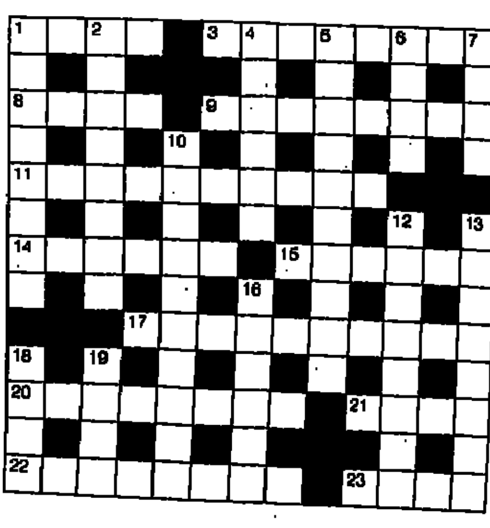


Robert Huebner v Helmut Pfleger, Bundesliga 1989. Just a simple rook ending with level pawns, but both the German No 1 Huebner and the chess TV commentator Pfleger (Black, to play) believed the other was about to resign.

Who was disappointed — White, Black, or both?

No 2525: *1...c2?* 2 Qxf6+ Kxf6 3 e8Q+ Kg7 4 Qxe4 with a piece up. Instead *1...Qb1+!* with Qa2+ and Qf7 wins.

Quick crossword no. 421



Across

1 Competent — sort of seaman (4)
3 Gallows (8)
8 Sea-eagle (4)
9 Unconventional (8)
11 30 minutes (4,2,4)
14 Refuse to work (6)
15 Lure (6)
17 Which motorists should obey! (5,5)
20 Estrange (8)
21 Supply — store (4)
22 Shipbuilding area (8)
23 Remain — support (4)

Down

1 Bluish-violet semiprecious stone (8)
2 Innkeeper (8)
4 Dress (6)
5 Often (10)
6 Exclude (4)
7 Cold and wet (4)
10 Trickery (5-5)
12 Alight (8)
13 In a passionate way (8)
16 Seesaw (6)
18 Pass — member of crew (4)
19 Record (4)

Last week's solution

HADRIANSWALL · ODIUM · FAILING · NOON · SENTENCE · IBERIA · SCARAB · APERITIF · RUSH · ORIFICE · UNION · EVERYSOOFTEN

Bridge Zia Mahmood

THE bridge players of the future can take heart. Thanks mainly to the growth of the game on the Internet, Microsoft has dipped its giant toe into the pool of bridge sponsorship, adding its considerable prestige to the Cavendish Calcutta tournament in Las Vegas. With the bridge equivalent of the fastest guns in the West — and the East as well — pouring into the gambling capital of the world, the ante-post favourites were the Frenchmen Christian Mari and Alain Levy, World and Olympic champions. But Vegas is never predictable, and the three-day event rarely follows the form book.

I can admit that the final result was both good and bad for me. Having been carried by the excellent play of my partner, Steve Weinstein, into the lead after the first four sessions, we relinquished that place at the last gasp to Bob Hamman and Nick Nickell. But the size of the second prize — this is by far the richest tournament in the world — was ample consolation. The margin by which we lost was small enough that avoiding any one disaster would have been enough for victory. See if you can avoid this one, perhaps the most embarrassing.

Your hand is a spectacular:

♠3 ♥AK82 ♦AKQJ973 ♣4

and what is more, you have a spectacular way to show it.

This is how the bidding begins:

South You	West	North	East
2♣(1)	Pass	2♦(2)	Pass
3♥(3)	Pass	4♣(4)	Double
Pass(5)	Pass	5♥(6)	Pass
?			

(1) Strong and artificial, just showing a good hand. (2) A relay, waiting for more information. (3) Showing exactly four hearts, and six or seven diamonds! This, which I hasten to add is my partner's convention rather than mine, certainly helped us here. (4) Another relay bid, showing interest in a slam in one of my suits. (5) The rot starts to set in.

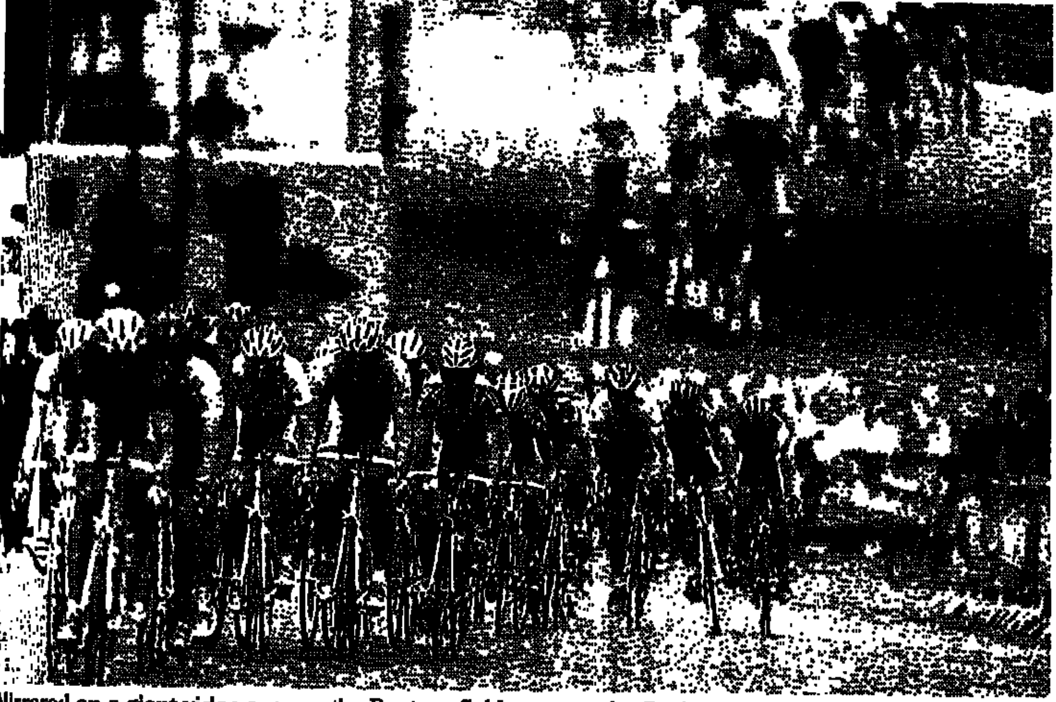
A common agreement among expert players is that when a cue bid is doubled, the next player passes with second-round control in the suit (king or singleton), redoubles with first-round control (ace or void), or bids with no control. Since 4♣ was not clearly a cue bid, it wasn't clear whether it would apply in this situation. (6) When the enemy have shown a suit, either by bidding it or by doubling a bid in it, a jump to five of a major normally asks partner to bid six if he can avoid two losers in the suit. But if my pass of four clubs doubled had already implied second-round control of clubs, this jump to five hearts would simply be an invitation to six if my two suits were adequate. Now you know as much as I did. What is your decision: will you bid six or pass? I bid six hearts. This was a pity, for partner's hand was:

♠KQ74 ♥QJ965 ♦None ♣J762

West led a club, East won with the ace and shot back a spade, and I had to suffer the indignity of losing the first two tricks in a slam to the opponents' two aces. On reflection, I ought to have passed five hearts. If partner had held the ace of spades, he would have cue-bid it, and if he had held the ace of clubs, he would have redoubled when four clubs was passed round to him. Still, I've learned a couple of things: people who use Blackwood rarely bid slams with two aces missing. And I can't beat him, so I'm going to join him — Bob Hamman will be my partner in the World Pairs tournament in August. I'm fed up with finishing second!

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
June 7 1998

Cycling



Mirrored on a giant video screen, the Prutour field contests the final stage in London PHOTO: CLIVE MASON

O'Grady slips but has his day

William Fotheringham

A MINOR hiccup on the final corner deprived Stuart O'Grady of a possible third stage win of the Prudential Tour of Britain, but the Australian's sixth place outside Prudential's headquarters was sufficient to seal the first tour victory of his young career from his GAN team-mate Chris Boardman.

O'Grady pulled a foot out of its pedal on the final left-hander 100 yards from the line at the end of the 50-mile circuit race around High Holborn and lost his momentum. "I had a perfect lead-out," he said, "but I couldn't quite achieve the fairy-tale ending."

The stage victory went to his compatriot Jay Sweet, already a winner in Blackpool and, like O'Grady, a probable starter in the Tour de France next month. Sweet, who rides for the French Bigmat team, was certain that O'Grady's mishap had not affected the stage's outcome. "I was that psyched up, I won the stage in the first 10 pedal strokes out of the corner. I had been telling people all week that I was going to win this stage."

There was poetic justice in the verdict: on Saturday the roles of the two had been reversed, O'Grady winning the stage in Rochester at the end of 105 miles across Kent and Sussex in front of a crowd estimated at around 200,000, and afterwards Sweet was the one bemoaning his ill-luck after choosing the wrong gear and finishing fourth.

O'Grady's overall victory had seemed likely from the moment he won the stage to York, taking the red leader's jersey from Boardman, who hinted that his 24-year-old team-mate would have a better chance of maintaining the lead for the next six stages.

"The team have always had confidence that I would make a good stage-race rider," said O'Grady, who has also shown good form in the spring one-day classics since turning professional for GAN in 1995. Like Sweet he hails from Adelaide and is part of a little "cycling Australia" in the Toulouse area, living and training with half a dozen professionals from Down Under who are based with European teams.

The Prutour also marked a welcome return to form for Boardman, who won the prologue time-trial in Stirling and the first stage in Newcastle.

● The fifth stage of the Prutour was cancelled after a police motorcycle outrider died in a road accident. David Hoskins, aged 41, collided with an oncoming car while travelling ahead of the 89 cyclists.

Tennis French Open

Sampras again denied elusive clay court title

Stephen Bierley in Paris

THE first week of a Grand Slam tournament can be likened to the Tour de France before the first time-trial and the mountains. A lot can happen but it is rarely conclusive.

However, if trophies were handed out for sheer stamina then Alex Corretja of Spain and Argentine Hernan Gumy would surely be picking up their share of silverware. The two men were involved in one of the longest matches in French Open history, a 5hr 31min marathon in the third round.

Corretja, a game away from levelling when the match was stopped overnight, went on to win 6-1, 5-7, 6-7, 7-5, 9-7, but only after meeting tough resistance from Gumy as he fought back from 1-5 down in the final set.

Elsewhere, Marat Safin, the 18-year-old qualifier from Moscow, made an impressive entrance by beating Andre Agassi of the United States in the first round. Safin then dispatched Brazil's No 8 seed Gustavo Kuerten, the reigning champion, 3-6, 7-6, 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Pete Sampras's hopes of winning the one Grand Slam title that has eluded him were dashed again when he lost abjectly 7-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the second round to Ramon Delgado, a 21-year-old Paraguayan ranked No 97 in the world. Britain's Greg Rusedski and Tim Henman made first-round exits.

Marcelo Rios of Chile, the men's title favourite, beat Spain's Albert Costa 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 in 2hr 38 min for a place in the quarter-finals.

Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov, who won the title here two years ago, was beaten 4-6, 7-6, 7-6, 6-1 by Thomas Enqvist of Sweden.

In the women's competition, France's Mary Pierce built up a seemingly impregable 5-1 lead in the first set against Spain's Magui Serna and then cracked completely, losing 7-5, 6-2, much to the derision of the Parisian crowd.

Hockey World Cup

Australians retain cup

Pat Rowley in Utrecht

AUSTRALIA maintained their dominance of the women's game by retaining the World Cup last Sunday. They defeated the Netherlands 3-2 in the final here in front of a fiercely partisan crowd of 15,000.

Alyson Annan was the star attraction in a quality team performance by a side with many changes from their 1996 Atlanta Olympics gold medal team, and which is being developed for the Sydney Olympics.

The young England team finished ninth, as they did four years ago, by beating Scotland 2-0 with well-taken goals by the two Janes, Sixsmith and Smith.

In the final of the men's competition, Netherlands beat Spain 3-2 with a sudden-death goal after extra-time had failed to settle the issue.

England's campaign ended in a disappointing sixth place.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Surrey spin magic

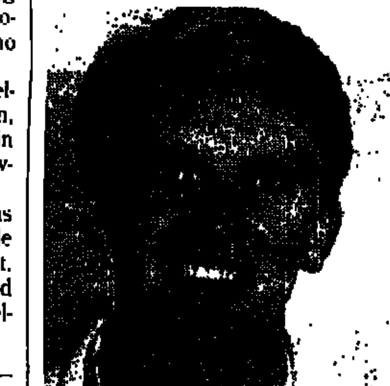
A MAGNIFICENT innings of 93 off 109 balls by Mike Atherton for Lancashire was not enough to stop holders Surrey reaching the semi-finals of the Benson & Hedges Cup.

After a second-wicket stand of 122 between Atherton and John Crawley at The Oval, Lancashire looked set for a big score, but their remaining batsmen failed to capitalise on the good start and were all out for 203. Surrey's spinners, Ian Salisbury and Saqlain Mushtaq did most of the damage, the latter claiming the 12th hat-trick in the competition's history. Surrey reached their target with nearly five overs to spare.

Adam Hollioake's side will now meet Leicestershire at Grace Road on June 9, after Leicestershire easily disposed of Kent, whose innings of 158, including a knock of 60 from Carl Hooper and 55 extras, offered little challenge to their opponents.

Meanwhile Yorkshire (269-5) defeated Durham at Headingley, and will be home to Essex (232-9), who beat Middlesex by eight runs. Essex's lanky seam bowler Ashley Cowan was his side's hero with figures of 5-28.

DERBYSHIRE captain and all-rounder Dominic Cork is back in the England squad for the first Test against South Africa at Edgbaston this week. Cork — who took seven wickets in his debut against West Indies in 1995, and went on to claim a hat-trick later in the series — has been troubled by fitness and form in recent seasons and last featured in the Test side 16 months ago against New Zealand. Mike Atherton, who resigned as captain, has been retained as an opener. The England 12 are: Stewart, Atherton, Butcher, Hussain, Thorpe, Ramprakash, Ealham, Cork, Croft, Gough, Fraser and Headley.



Cork: international recall

Follow the first Test on the Internet at http://www.cricket98.co.uk

ANDY GORAM, Scotland's first-choice goalkeeper for the World Cup starting next week, walked out of the training squad in New Jersey and announced that he is quitting international football. The 34-year-old Rangers player claimed recent newspaper allegations about his private life had forced him to quit. Goram said the move was in the best interests of Craig Brown's squad.

Aberdeen's Jim Leighton, who will be 40 in July, was called up for last Saturday's World Cup warm-up match against the United States in Washington, which ended in a goalless draw. Goram had been capped 43 times by Scotland, who have drafted Celtic goalkeeper Jonathan Gould into the side for France 98.

CHELSEA strengthened their Italian connection with the signing of striker Pierluigi Casiraghi, who joined the Stamford Bridge side in a $8.8 million move from Serie A club Lazio. Colin Hutchinson, managing director of the west London club, said: "It's great news. I'm sure Chelsea fans will be happy to hear we're continuing to bring in quality players."

A domestic transfer made Kevin Davies, an England Under-21 international, the most expensive player in the history of Blackburn Rovers when he moved from Southampton to Ewood Park in a $12.3 million deal, surpassing Chris Sutton's record signing at $8.2 million. Davies's impressive goal-scoring form last season was closely watched by several leading Premiership clubs, including Arsenal, Manchester United and Leeds.

NEWCASTLE United chairman Sir John Hall stepped down from the position he had reassumed on a temporary basis following the scandal which engulfed the club in the wake of tabloid revelations. Other boardroom moves saw Sir Terence Harrison, a prominent businessman, quit as chairman of the public company that owns the football club. John Mayo, a leading finance director in British industry, also said he would resign. The official statement from Sir Terence said it was now "constructive" for him and Mr Mayo to depart.

PROPOSALS by Sky that would have forced football fans to pay $16 to watch selected games on television were grounded when FA Premiership clubs turned down the plans unanimously. But both supporters' groups and football analysts see it as only a temporary setback. The clubs will face the same decision next year, so some form of pay-to-view for English football's top-flight matches appears inevitable.

WITH the World Cup just days away, police forces in France, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Switzerland swooped on suspected Islamic terrorist networks, detaining nearly 90 people in one of the biggest co-ordinated anti-terror operations mounted in Europe. Police also seized fake documents, computer disks and Islamic fundamentalist tracts, in synchronised raids in a number of cities.

THE Ethiopian runner Haile Gebrselassie grabbed back his 10,000 metres' world record with a scorching run of 26min 22.75sec at Hengelo, in the Netherlands, knocking five seconds off the record Paul Tergat of Kenya set in Brussels.

SPAIN'S Alex Criville held off Honda team-mate Michael Doohan to win the French 500cc Grand Prix at Le Castellet and take a two-point lead over the Australian world champion.